

# Gothic Beauty Magazine

ISSUE 47

## AMF KORSETS

LOUIS FLEISCHAUER'S  
LEATHER-FASHIONED  
WEARABLE ART

## MAKE A BOLD STATEMENT

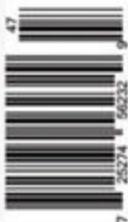
FASHIONS WITH  
J-CHAN'S DESIGNS  
HELENE HAWTHORNE

## ADORABLE & SINISTER

THE WORK OF  
SWEDISH ARTIST  
ELIN JONSSON  
& AFTERLAND

MUSIC INTERVIEWS WITH  
**SEPTEMBER MOURNING**  
**JUSTIN SYMBOL**  
**ASHTON NYTE**

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Holiday Media

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## ***ON THE COVER***

MODEL **DANI DIVINE**

PHOTOGRAPHY **MY BOUDOIR PHOTOGRAPHY**

OUTFIT **ROYAL BLACK COUTURE AND CORSETRY**

CROWN **MYSTIC THREAD**



## YOU SAID IT, WE READ IT



HERE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVORITE COMMENTS  
ABOUT ISSUE 46 FROM FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

### GOTH'S AROUND THE WORLD

"Loving the goths around the world feature. looking forward to seeing more of those"

**FELICIA ONO**

"@gothicbeautymag loved the first installment of this article!"

**DAWN @DMCDEVITT19**

"I love that you are showing goths of different races!! it will help kids who live in an area where they are the only goth of color! kudos!!"

**BRANDI BLADES**

"This makes me so happy to see that more black goth girls are getting exposure, because i've been a weird black girl my whole life and when I joined the alternative subculture at 13, there weren't many. I didn't meet a black goth until much later. 10 years later, i'm starting to do alt modeling ( amateur at the moment) & it's good to see people showcasing more inspiration for me"

**ROXY VAIL**

"Yaaaa, I'm not alone in this world!!!"

**BELLA SKULL ROSE**



"Yay for equality in this culture! I don't get out much and I know very few who are into the goth scene like me. It's heartwarming and amazing that Goths of all races are given attention. I believe black Goths are my weakness..."

**BETHANY SCHMIDT**

### MORBID DOLLHOUSE

"Now these dolls are creepy .... very creepy.... ceeeeeeeeeeepy"

**AMERICAN GYPSY / KYLA  
@REDRIDNGHOOD34**

"These are amazingly awesome. holy crap!"

**TRACEY MANNIX**

"Loved the morbid doll house! also the ads loving the ads"

**TERRIE CHAVARRIA**

### COVER

"Gorgeous cover model!"

**ALEX OETHERLETERS**



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# THE KING





OF NEGATIVITY'S  
TRUE FACE

*An Interview with  
Justin Symbol*

By Gabrielle Faust

**B**ehind nearly every creative construct of angst and violence lies a deeper, more complicated creature, one riddled with human foibles and all of the tender insecurities that make such a individual an “artist.” Often times the line between performance and reality is blurred as we attempt to fight our demons with protective identities that shield us from the harsher edges of our own existence. The stage becomes a safe haven, a pulpit from which to scream our discontent with social norms and our rage at the lack of empathy humanity has for its brethren. The audience looks on with a wonder of whether or not the creature on stage is real—preconceptions are easily made and perpetuated by the rumblings of rumors. Shakespeare once wrote, “All the world’s a stage.” And for some, such as musician and performance artist Justin Symbol, that stage is a very dark place. I had the rare honor of speaking with Mr. Symbol about his new album *Voidhead* and the shadowy road to its creation.

When asked where the inspiration for *Voidhead* originated Symbol replied, “The influence really came from my own life. I was bottoming out at the time in my personal life and I felt I was in a place of despair. I was kind of a nihilist and I was in a place where I felt like I was hitting a wall. Trying to kill yourself every day with drinking and drugs, but you wake up the next day and you’re still alive. Getting arrested—I spent the night in jail after I finished the song ‘Purgatory’, which is rather ironic. There were a lot of incidents like that. There was also a sense of spiritual bankruptcy. I had no faith in anything. And, if anything, I had a sense that I was fucking possessed by the Devil or some shit because just couldn’t stop self-destructing.”

Out of that darkness evolved an alternate identity Justin Symbol named the “King of Negativity.” While many who see his live

shows have come to the opinion that Symbol truly believes himself thus, he reminds us all that the title is merely a character created for the stage.

“He is the manifestation of my ego. He is the character I portray on some of the cockier songs on *Voidhead*,” he remarked and went on to say, “The first few songs, especially the title track is about this guy who arrives at the club and he just thinks he is the shit. In his mind he is the predator and everyone else is the prey. He is basically there to do something really vicious. It doesn’t go into details but this guy basically doesn’t give a shit about anyone else but himself and he is out there to cause harm. This idea continues in the song ‘Control’ where I proclaim myself the King of Negativity. It’s like I’m saying I’m the blackest of the black sheep. But there’s a touch of irony in it, where it’s almost like the person who is saying it realizes they are full of shit. By the end of ‘Control’, which is about me asking myself ‘Do I want to be dominated? Do I really want to be a leader? Do I really want to be an individual? Or is it about being dominated by external fears?’ But the answer is actually that I’m just like everyone else, I’m just a slave.”

“In a way the King of Negativity, the character, was something that saved me. It was my ego protecting me from completely destroying myself. And in a way I’m thankful for it. But it’s not the real me. The real me is obviously a lot more complex. But a lot of people just like to look at the surface; they don’t like to go deeper.”

With an album such as *Voidhead* which is riddled with sharp commentaries on society, our inner natures, and our manipulation by the media and our own subculture, I was curious what Symbol thought the overall message was behind his music. To this he replied, “Reality is smoke and mirrors. I talk about that a little bit in some of the other songs. But the lyrics

**“DO I  
REALLY  
WANT TO  
BE AN  
INDIVIDUAL?  
OR IS IT  
ABOUT  
BEING  
DOMINATED  
BY  
EXTERNAL  
FEARS?”**

on the album are really about me communicating with myself, for the most part—it's an existential journey and an internal dialogue of self-help."

He continued on to say, "We all have that part of our minds that tells us we're a piece of shit, that we're not good enough and we should just give up. I'm articulating that voice that's in my mind that's constantly telling me 'You're a fucking failure. You're nothing.' I think a lot of people can relate because a lot of people have that same voice. They have that

same distorted sense of themselves and they're relying on other people to tell them who they are. They're relying on external realities to tell them what their internal reality is. I went through a huge process of self-realization on this album."

With such a long journey from self-destruction and loathing to an introspective state of existential awareness, I was intrigued to find out more about Justin Symbol's personal musical progression.

When asked about his background in music and the evolution of *Voidhead* he replied, "It was a long progression. Before Justin Symbol I was in a band called Nursing Home and I was frustrated with the way it was going. I had been in a series of bands where it was more of a traditional band format where everyone was writing songs together. I was frustrated because I would build up a band and after a year the band would sort of implode. That had happened twice. So this album *Voidhead* became my outlet. The lyrics I was writing were deeply personal in way that I had never

The advertisement features a dark, ornate background with a repeating pattern of concentric circles and floral motifs. In the center, there are two main product displays. On the left, under the heading 'EyeDust', are four small jars of eyeshadow in pink, magenta, gold, and blue. Below this is a row of ten 'LipGloss' tubes in various colors. To the right, under the heading 'NeonWarrior', are three larger jars of eyeshadow in bright pink, yellow, and orange. Below these are three smaller jars of eyeshadow. The overall aesthetic is edgy and modern.

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# MUSIC

reached that level of honesty of where I was at."

He continued, "The guitarist and producer, Babba Yagga, we've been friends for years. We lived together and he was really the first person I made music with. So we have a deep understanding of each other. I think he saw that I was in a dark place and he believed in me at a time when really no one else believed in

me. So, I was going to DC every weekend and doing these self-destructive binges. Through the binges these songs came out. The record is really a collaboration between me and Babba Yagga. I realized I still had this will to live and the album was the one thing I had to live for, the one thing that allowed me to express where I was at—that saved my life, really."

Unlike many of today's artists whose pain and personal struggle is a construct of managers, media, and stylist gurus, Justin Symbol is honesty in its rawest form. His belief in the power of music is beautifully poignant and at times surreal.

"Music is spiritual," he said. "It is ancient. It comes from shaman. The reason we put on makeup and put on this theatrical show is because we are just modern day shaman, really. Everything we do is very tribal in nature. It is really about tapping into that force. People need to put down the smart phone and open their eyes. That's when the magic happens."

With his sites on the future, Justin Symbol is working hard to bring life to his new tour and to bring *Voidhead* to new audiences across the country.

"We're doing a national tour. That is going to be a huge boost because we will be reaching a lot of younger fans who have never heard our music. We're going to be face to face with people, selling these albums at shows. As far as the perception, I just want people to listen to it and they'll like it. Hopefully they'll look deeper—maybe it's not telling a story that is new, but it is definitely telling it in a different way. Some of the people who have written us off will definitely be surprised by what we're doing next because it's going to show a very different side to my personality and the band's musical abilities."

Full of surprises, from the beginning of this interview until the end, when asked if he had any concluding thoughts for the readers of *Gothic Beauty*, he replied, "I feel that the alternative culture used to be an alternative to the mainstream. But now it's just become a mirror of the mainstream, but a smaller world that mirrors the values of the mainstream. I think the mainstream has co-opted the things, the punk fashion, the gothic fashion, that made the alternative culture unique at first. But what it hasn't co-opted is the substance, the message because that substance, that message is always going to be a little bit deeper than the masses are going to be ready for. So I think it's important for anyone who is into this culture to ask themselves why they are into this culture and to produce art that is deeper because that is where this whole thing started."

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# BOOK REVIEWS

1

## WILL STARLING: A NOVEL

**STEERFORTH PRESS**  
Ian Weir

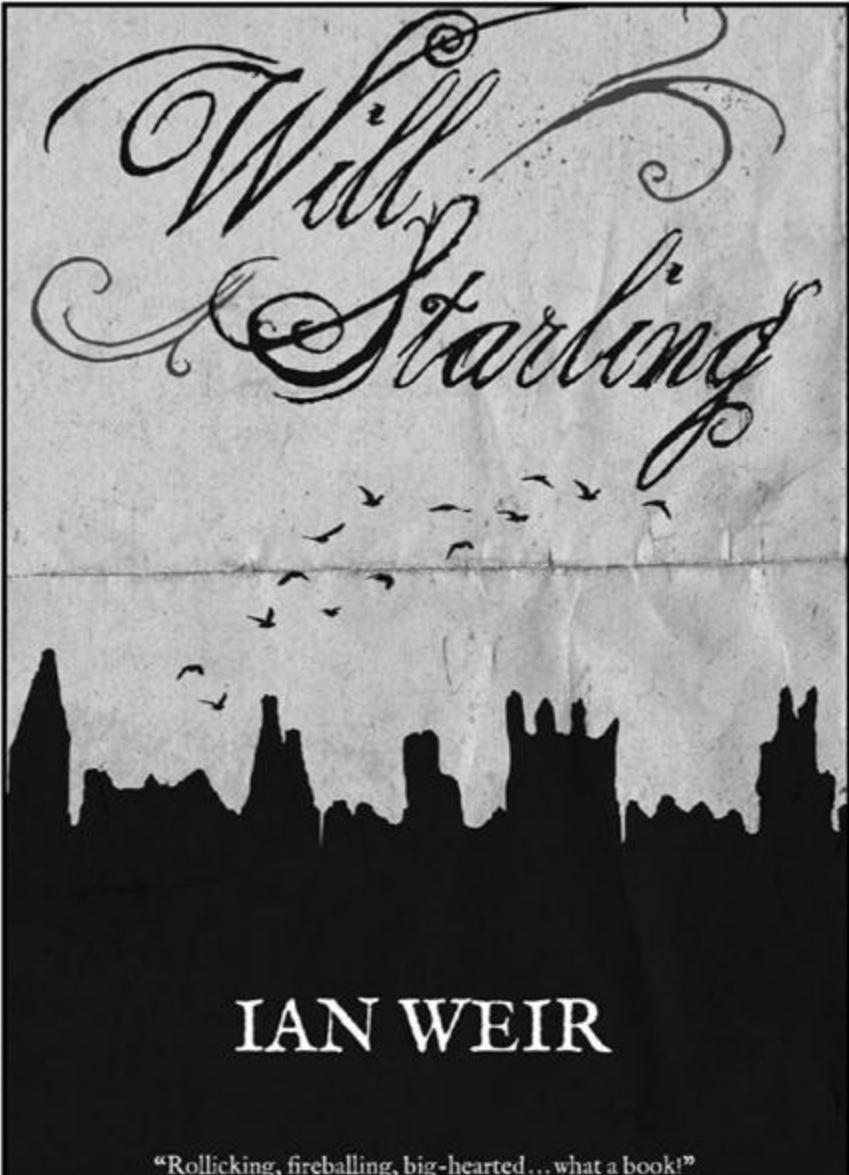
Set in the Regency era of London in 1816, Will Starling follows its eponymous narrator through the underground and up through surgeons' lectures, Newgate Prison, and all the twisting dark alleys and dismal pubs and rented rooms that a reader could ask for. Starling is the surgeon Comrie's apprentice, the two return from the Napoleonic wars and set up shop together, meanwhile dark rumors are spreading about Comrie's surgical colleague Atherton, who's drive for power and greed for knowledge of life and death open the door for less-than-legal, and certainly less-than-ethical doings involving grave robbers, their charges, and the great questions of medical science.

Starling and his peers are pulled along into this long, beautifully twisted narrative as the protagonist struggles with his origins, his role in the war, and the present happenings of his life in London. One of the great strengths of this novel is the assertion that nothing in a life exists in isolation; even as the novel is coming to a close and the culmination of the plot reaches its point and Will Starling has conclusion, his past is pulled along with him, adding both dimension and the horrors of reality to each decision and action.

Will Starling is a fantastic story wrapped in unendingly beautiful, smart, and witty prose. The language, over and over, is really what got me in this text—Weir's love of English breaks through on every page, and it's the language that I'll cite first when recommending this book. But the characters, too, and the story itself are right behind that—Weir's characters, in all their faulty, often-hilarious, often bedraggled realness, keep the reader turning pages. Of special note, aside from the narrator himself, is the character of Meg Nancarrow, who is a force of nature and an unflinching depiction of lasting female anger. Her character is a prime example of the result of life-long poverty in a time and place that offered almost no rights or guarantees to women in general and poor women in particular. Will Starling proves to be a charming and delightful narrator, self-educated and much better than he gives himself credit for.

This gothic story is largely about all-to-human drives, although the supernatural has its place here as well, impressively understated and all the more eerie for it. Peppered with literary references and cameos by characterizations of real people like the poet John Keats and the then-famous actor Edmund Kean, Weir's text is thoroughly researched in all the topics it covers, from the medical to warfare to experimentation, and the brutal reality of life in London in the early nineteenth century. Will Starling will find fond readership among the dispossessed, people who fall outside the mainstream of society and instead populate its fringes. It is a gorgeous, dark gem of a novel, and I am very grateful it crossed my path.

GAIL



"Rollicking, fireballing, big-hearted...what a book!"

2

## SOME WEAR LEATHER SOME WEAR LACE: THE WORLDWIDE COMPENDIUM OF POSTPUNK AND GOTH IN THE 1980S ANDI HARRIMAN AND MARLOES BONTJE

This book charts the development of the Goth and Postpunk scenes through the 1980s and early 1990s, primarily through pictures, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the origins of the subcultures we love and embrace, no matter how much they've changed, today. The photos are glorious; musicians and everyday folks are featured, several from personal collections that were sent in to the authors for reproduction in this text. The photos feature goths from several countries including the United States and the UK, and also Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, as well as countries like Japan, and Peru.

The fashion, the hair, and the way it's evolved over the decades is inspiring and beautiful. There are loads of mini-interviews within the book too, from members of the original scenes, as well as the authors' views and assessments of subcultural developments in the last handful of decades, some of which people may have differing views on, but that's endemic to discussions on the beginning, evolution, and potential death of any subculture.

What perhaps struck me most while reading this and taking in all the photographs was how DIY the original postpunk and early goth scene was, and the authors and interviewees focus also on the theatricality of the early looks and moods. There

just weren't the retailers and independent designers around that are here today, the market was entirely different, and there seemed to be a lot more spontaneous, individual creativity, borne from necessity. Goths these days tend to be fairly creative types, and there's still that DIY feeling in much of the subculture, but this book ignited a desire to start being more adventurous with my own DIY projects, and if it has that affect in other readers, then great. Some Wear Leather Some Wear Lace was crowdfunded, and as such there is a limited number of books in print; the book's website [postpunkproject.com](http://postpunkproject.com) has information about availability. The authors also run the Tumblr blog "Now This is Gothic" which features vintage photos from a vast collection. This book is beautifully constructed, made by people who have a love and dedication to the early iterations of the postpunk and goth subcultures, filled with photos that capture the passion and creativity of people from all over the world.

GAIL

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PAPERBACK, 216 PAGES  
INTELLECT

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By Andi Harriman and Marloes Bontje

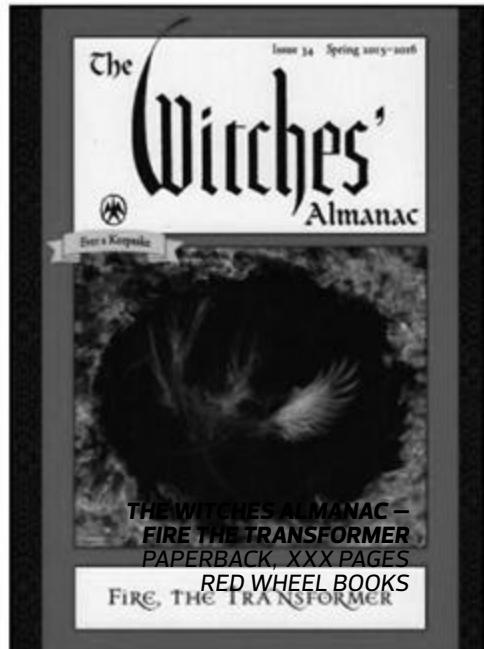
3

## THE WITCHES' ALMANAC FIRE THE TRANSFORMER THEITIC

The Witches' Almanac is an odd collection of things. As the blurb says, despite being called an almanac only about 15 percent of each issue is relevant to the dates on the cover. The rest of the issue is made up of interesting snippets, traditional chants, herbal remedies and folk tales. A list of important dates for the year (including Black Cat Appreciation day on August 17th) begins the book, with reviews of other publications and a 'marketplace' for services of interest to Wiccans at the back. There is an article on the history of umbrellas, which was unexpectedly interesting (did you know the parasol was one of the eight sacred symbols of Buddhism?) and a piece explaining exactly why people shouldn't spend time outside graveyards on Halloween. 'Afternoon Tea for Witchery and Steampunk' explores the crossover between witchcraft and the Sci-Fi Victorian style, while another two-page article details the importance of and mystery surrounding the seasonal vegetable the Gourd. Other pieces detail how to select and use a prayer feather, or grow

a hedgerow filled with useful plants and what they can be used for once grown. A few pages after that, the spiritual properties of Rum are discussed, as is H. P. Lovecraft and his gothic works. There is a whole three pages devoted to 'Lumberjack folklore', a topic most people would not have considered existed until now! Each article is only a few pages in length and are all written in an accessible and friendly way, and despite the seemingly random nature of the collected works, it is surprisingly hard to put down! The Witches' Almanac is like a magazine, filled with short features to interest and inform when one only has a little time to spare. The book can be dipped into for a few minutes by those with a passing interest in witchcraft, or used as a useful reference for others who are regular practisers. For those with an interest in all things mythical and traditional it would make an unusual and welcome gift, for working witches it is likely to be invaluable.

LENORE




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PAPERBACK, 208 PAGES  
THE WITCHES' ALMANAC

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4

## REST IN PIECES: THE CURIOUS FATES OF FAMOUS CORPSES

### BESS LOVEJOY

Bess Lovejoy has researched and compiled a collection of the bizarre and sometimes absurd misadventures of famous corpses in Rest in Pieces: The Curious Fates of Famous Corpses. Lovejoy's work features famous cadavers ranging from outlaws to artists, politicians and writers; it's astonishing how many weird and crazy events occurred in regard to so many different dead bodies. Notable corpses and their after-life adventures include Rasputin, D.H. Lawrence, Edgar Allan Poe, Jesse James, Dante and Hunter S. Thompson, although that's a very short list of the names and tales featured within.

The book is written in a witty, conversational and sometimes humorous style, and it is easy for the reader to take for granted the enormous amount of research Lovejoy undertook to create this work. It contains a plethora of morbid trivia; you'll want to share the stories you read about in this book, tales that range from the shocking to the grotesque to the darkly humorous. But Lovejoy's work is more than just a bundle of well-researched fodder for anecdotes, it's a testament to the lengths people will go for love, possession and pride.

Over and over, we see stories of the living wanting possession over a treasured or reviled person's remains, an entitlement to a body that no longer has any agency of its own. In this way Lovejoy's work is also an examination of human behavior, and how

in some fundamental ways, very little has changed over the centuries.

Lovejoy, in her introduction, comments on the way that we treat bodies reflects the cultural climate of the time in which they lived and died. She also points out that in the Western World, our traditions regarding mourning have grown more and more distant and separate from daily life in the last century or so. Lovejoy is a member of the Death Salon, a group which fosters conversation about mortality and seeks to redress our culture's denial and sterilization of death and mourning practices. She is also a member and founder of the Order of the Good Death, and as such is well-qualified to write on the subject.

Rest in Pieces succeeds in being both entertaining and thought-provoking; the stories contained within it may serve as a great jumping-off point for wider discussions about death, mortality and the place of mourning in our lives. It also highlights questions of agency, the symbolism and fascination with the human body even after life has past. It's a great read—very highly recommended.

---

HARDCOVER, 352 PAGES  
SIMON & SCHUSTER

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GAIL

5

## THE ART OF GOTHIC

### NATASHA SCHARF

Summing up the gothic subculture in all its glorious aesthetic is no easy task. British author and goth-commentator Natasha Scharf set herself a mammoth undertaking in The Art Of Gothic, but commendably every possible style features among the pages, not just what purists would consider 'goth'. What is made clear from the introduction is that while some may view the term 'goth' as restrictive, as time goes on and goth shows no sign of dying, the subculture actually incorporates a huge variety of mini-styles in numerous mediums under its "extendable black umbrella". It is not just a 'look' to be worn on a Friday night, but instead a style that has infiltrated cinema, album artwork, paintings, comic books and even toys. Goth style is broken up into seven chapters within the book, each with glossy, full-colour pages filled with decent sized pictures. Fashion photographs, as well as goths-on-the-street, make up only part of the visual content, as every medium touched by goth has a place including film posters, sculpture and architecture. Album covers feature heavily as it is

made clear that the gothic aesthetic and its music cannot be separated. The deep purple hardback book does not shy away from more recent incarnations of goth either, much to traditionalists' distaste I would imagine, as pop goth has a dedicated chapter of its own. Bands like AFI, HIM and My Chemical Romance feature, as well as pioneers of the witchhouse genre and cartoon goth girl Emily The Strange. Each chapter has a decent amount of text introducing it too, rather than relying on the images to do the work alone. On the face of it The Art Of Gothic is a beautiful coffee table book, a substantial reference for inspiration. But it is more than just a collection of images. It attempts to breakdown and detail how goth has changed, what has influenced the style and music and how goths capacity for adaptation and its willingness to absorb other styles has kept the genre alive. It depicts the evolution of a subculture like no other, one that has evolved into a multi-faceted and, despite what some might say, thriving international subculture.




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HARDCOVER, 224 PAGES  
BACKBEAT BOOKS

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LENORE

13

**6**

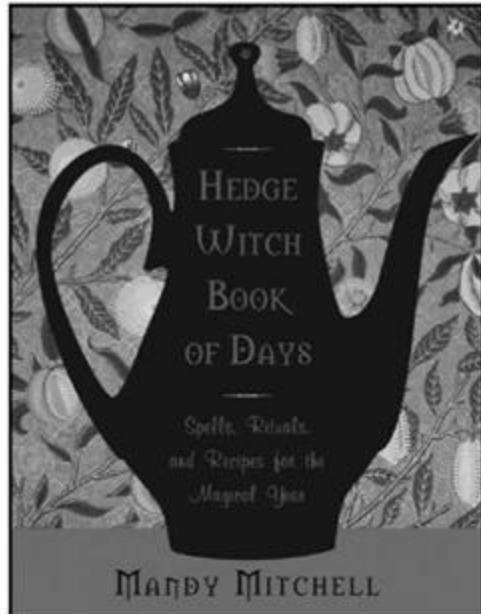
## HEDGEWITCH BOOK OF DAYS MANDY MITCHELL

The Hedgewitch Book Of Days is in all parts a tale of the quintessential British country witch. Written by a practicing hedgewitch from the English county of Wiltshire, the Book Of Days compiles a month-by-month guide for the traditional witch living in modern times. A hedgewitch usually works alone and utilises nature in his or her spells. Author Mandy Mitchell writes in way that makes you feel as though you are chatting over a cup of tea in her kitchen, rather than reading a book alone, as she makes jokes and pokes fun at herself and talks to the reader. The book begins in March, as this is the first month of Spring, and each chapter contains seasonal recipes and natural household tips, as well as the colours, flowers and festivals that relate to that month. While the British seasons won't help a witch in California much, the simple everyday rituals and practical spells are relevant to every practicing witch with a busy schedule. The idea behind the book is to add magic to everyday life, for those of us that don't necessarily have time for long ceremonies or intricate, long-winded spells. Mitchell herself confesses to not being able to fit in all the aspects of witchery that she would like, but

finds a way to bring a little magic into everything – cleaning, cooking, even looking after her pets and making things with her children. She also highlights that many of us already do little things that could be considered magical, and with a little focus and a moment's meditation, these things can bring about positive changes. Each chapter is really easy to follow and can be used as quick reference where needed, or read as a whole for ideas for the whole seasonal year. Either way the Book Of Days encourages people to find their own magic within, and makes it simple to do so. At no point does she make it feel like a chore, or a rigid set of rules that must be followed. Using the internet to discuss practices and carry out research is encouraged. Not being perfect at everything is something to be expected and almost relished, and making magic work for you, rather than the other way round, is the end result. If you are looking for a glimpse into the life of a modern, practicing hedgewitch in the British countryside look no further than this book. If you want a step-by-step guide on how to make your busy life a touch more magical with seemingly minimal effort, look no further than this book!

PAPERBACK, 288 PAGES  
WEISER BOOKS

LENORE

**7**

## THE DELICATE DEPENDENCY A NOVEL OF THE VAMPIRE LIFE MICHAEL TALBOT

As a child in Victorian England, John Gladstone saw an angel. Decades later, Gladstone is a successful and respected Doctor and father, he sees his angel again—only this time he runs him over with his carriage. It is while Niccolo is convalescing in Gladstone's home he reviews that he is a vampire, parceling out tidbits of his long life before abruptly kidnapping Gladstone's younger daughter and disappearing into the night.

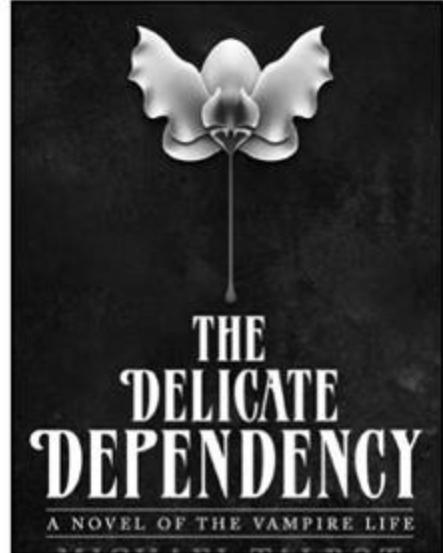
Dr. Gladstone gives chase with the aid of his older daughter and the Lady Hespeth Dunaway, a woman whose life parallels Gladstone's in some vital ways. The two are unwittingly drawn into the alien, sophisticated and enchanting world of the vampire as they attempt to rescue their children, and protect Dr. Gladstone's life's work.

The Delicate Dependency was originally published in 1982; this new edition is the only time it's been in print since then. Hailed as a classic of the genre, it was a difficult volume to track down once upon a time, so readers everywhere should take the opportunity to read it now. I had heard of the book several times, always with glowing reviews, from fans of vampire literature. This edition features an excellent forward by Jillian Venters, the woman behind Gothic Charm School book and website.

The vampires in The Delicate Dependency are urbane, with highly rarefied interests and areas of knowledge. They are also, in some cases, almost unbelievably old. They've taken on the role of the custodians of all human knowledge, collecting and analyzing our creations throughout the centuries. The most striking thing about them, perhaps, is how alien, how utterly inhuman, some of them are; it's fascinating to watch their interactions with the humans in the story.

Like Venters mentions in her forward, I also found the character of Dr. Gladstone to be on the boring side, and a bit obtuse and useless, actually. He does serve as a foil for the vampires to play off of though. It seems that his role is more as a vehicle for us to observe and relish the more interesting and dynamic characters, including his daughter Ursula and the mysterious and enigmatic Hespeth.

Plotwise, this story is one surprise after another, epic in nature and sweeping in locations. The reveals just keep coming, some more believable than others, but Talbot does successfully convey the world-wide influence of the vampire on human society. Beautifully lush settings round out a work that is a sensory dream to wade through. The story's interest in looking at the vampire through a scientific or medi-



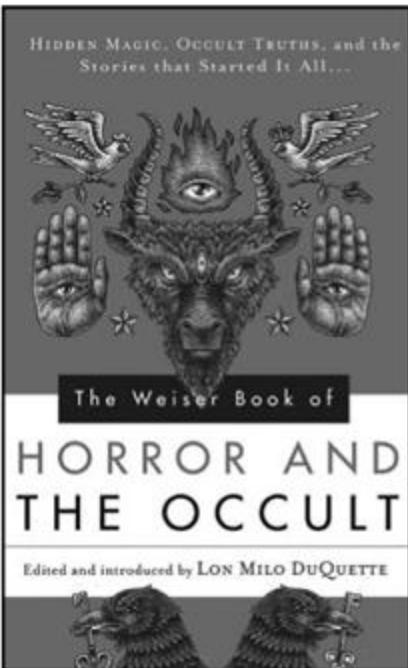
cal lens may strike some readers as tried at this point, but remember when Talbot wrote this in the eighties the idea was still new.

PAPERBACK, 382 PAGES  
VALANCOURT BOOKS

GAIL

## THE WEISER BOOK OF HORROR AND THE OCCULT

HIDDEN MAGIC, OCCULT TRUTHS, AND THE STORIES THAT STARTED IT ALL



as a "you will never think about death, dying and consciousness the same way again" way. It will stay with me for a very long time. "The Messenger" by Robert W. Chambers is captivating, charming and in places very funny, and Arthur Machen's "The White People" is a astounding well-composed story, full of hidden rituals, discussions of the nature of "evil" and is often held up as the exemplar of short horror fiction. Dion Fortune's "The Sea Lure" is tragic in a beautiful way, and "Luella Miller" by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman is darkly enchanting and highly recommended for lovers of the vampire genre.

"Casting the Runes" by M.R. James and "Dickon the Devil" by LeFanu are excellent ghost stories, and I loved DuQuette's hopefully tongue-and-cheek suggestion to read James' work out loud to children.

The contemporary reader will have to take into consideration the time period in which these stories were written, and the cultural attitudes that prevailed at the time. It is possible to be aware and critical of the viewpoints expressed in a few of these stories regarding sex, race and class while still enjoying most of the work. Fans of horror as well as occultism in general have a lot to gain from reading this book; especially if you know you really should check out some of these earlier writers but don't know where to start.

GAIL

PAPERBACK, 352 PAGES  
WEISER BOOKS

Edited and introduced by Lon Milo DuQuette, who is an author, Aleister Crowley specialist and the current United States Deputy Grand Master of the O.T.O., The Weiser Book of Horror and the Occult is a collection of classic horror stories with a focus on the occult is an absolute must-have for horror enthusiasts who need to broaden their background in the earlier iterations of the genre. All the stories contained herein were originally published between the mid-1800s and the early 1900s, and include such great artists as Arthur Machen, H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert W. Chambers, M.R. James, Bram Stoker and Dion Fortune, among others. These are some of the stories that helped form the genre.

Aleister Crowley's "The Testament of Magdalen Blair" is one of the most horrifying things I've ever read, not in a "monsters around the corner" way so much

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*By Marissa Phillips*

**A**t a time when there is a flourishing Goth and alternative fashion scene and cosplay is an accepted and even celebrated mainstream hobby, it's inspiring to hear tales from artisans who pursued those endeavors without the support, resources, and fan base we have today.

J-Chan's Designs' Jessica Rowell says that she grew up in a "once underdeveloped city of dry, open fields where 'Goth' was not prominent at all." In order to feed her desire for dark and dramatic fashion, she had to turn to DIY. She altered clothes, made her own accessories, and created character cosplays—and thus her early interest in fashion was cultivated.

Rowell's designs are bold, with a seemingly fearless intensity. Her daring silhouettes and combination and elegance and deconstruction cater to those with more dramatic tastes—the kind of person who wants to draw all eyes on them when they enter a room. Examining her entire body of

Photos by **Nicole Marcelli**

work, however, the designer explains there has been a definite evolution in her work throughout the years. She says that while her more recent works demonstrate more technical skill than her earlier works, she also carries more awareness of the fashion industry and she now puts greater emphasis on innovation and process rather than solely focusing completely on the creative aspect. "I was blinded as a young designer and my work was more carefree, it's much different now. I'm more conscious of the fashion industry at large, and my work now carries a broader appeal and perhaps surfaces from a place of imagination, innovation and thought-processes versus complete creativity," she says.

Although these days there is a more structured approach to design, that's not to say that J-Chan's Designs has lost any of its edge. Throughout the years, Rowell continues to take risks with her designs, and one might assume that her inspirations may have a lot to do with that. In terms of designer influences, industry innovators such as Alexander McQueen and Eiko Ishioka top her list. Ishioka's costume ➤

# J-CHAN'S Designs





FASHION



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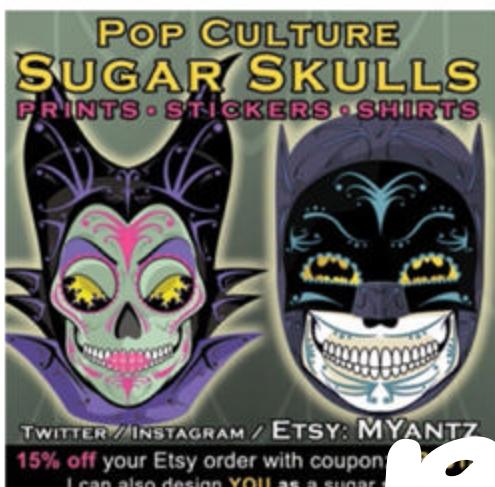
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> design in the movie *The Cell* in particular had a large impact on Rowell. "I watched *The Cell* in theaters as a teen and I feel as if those visuals have been ingrained in my mind. Ishioka's costuming for it still inspires me today." Rowell has a great appreciation for artisans who weren't afraid to take risks or bring an unconventional approach to the fashion industry, something which she says is not so commonly found in the industry these days. "The industry seemed far more colorful in the past," Rowell says. "Visionary designers were recognized and respected rather than commoditized or laughed off as useless or aberrant. There is a purpose and place for unconventional, genius design, but to me the current industry feels more like a bland carbon-copy factory."

And Rowell is indeed a visionary herself, working hard and not admitting defeat when faced with many of the obstacles artists commonly face. With an attitude that may work to motivate or inspire other artists, Rowell says "my work has different variations, or may simultaneously progress through cycles of artistic stagnation or doubt. I tend to work through those obstacles instead of stepping away."

That level of discipline and dedication that Rowell shows demonstrates an exceptional value and respect for the arts that falls in line with her personal views on art and fashion. As she explains, "Art is my freedom. Fashion is global, historical, cultural and broad in its purpose." When asked what role fashion plays in terms of personal identity, Rowell says, "I think the role of fashion is entirely subjective, for some it may be strictly to clothe and others pure vanity. It can also be an aide in self-discovery or a representation of fandoms, interests and sub-cultures." But ultimately, Rowell does not think that clothing and fashion define an individual. "Clothing is not who we are as people," she says. And although fashion may not define us, it is undeniable that the pieces she creates for J-Chan's Designs allow the wearer to make a bold statements.

Rowell stays revitalized in terms of both art and life through traveling. >

**"ART IS MY  
FREEDOM.  
FASHION IS  
GLOBAL,  
HISTORICAL,  
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AND BROAD  
IN ITS  
PURPOSE."**



**FASHION**





► She spent time in Japan, which she says was “life altering.” It was a fitting trip considering Rowell had an affinity for Japan and Japanese culture prior to her trip. “My work has a strong Japanese influence regardless of intention,” she explains. “The sub-cultural and traditional are both aspects I strongly identify with and feel influenced by.” She even dreams of one day having a storefront boutique in Harajuku, Tokyo.

Besides having a Japanese influence, Rowell says the most distinguishable element of her work is the “air of imagination.” She says “I think it has a natural, unexplainable presence to it.” And it’s that unexplainable presence that allows for J-Chan’s Designs’ variety and stylistic versatility. “I can produce dark gothic Victorian one day and then a frilly lace fairy gown the next and both will scream J-Chan,” says Rowell. Just take a look at the brand’s website and you will see feminine flower headdresses next to brazen skeleton ensembles, alongside glamorous and ghostly shrouds. Rowell’s willingness to explore different themes help keep fans guessing.

As for new projects Rowell is working on, she’s currently creating costume pieces for “Hip Hop Samurai,” an upcoming art book by photographer Jamais Vu. The costumes are “modern Japanese-inspired garb based off of mythical and traditional Japan” and they will be featured in several thematic photo sets.

To find out more about Rowell and see more of the world of J-Chan’s Designs, you can check out their website. The designer also offers encouraging words to readers and artisans. “Be yourself,” she says. “It’s beyond cliché, but I feel like authenticity is becoming more of a rarity. Your integrity and honesty will show in your work, which I think gives it an appealing rawness that is not only one-of-a-kind, but also your personal signature and will help you maintain a natural relevancy.” Go ahead and explore J-Chan’s Designs and be inspired by Rowell’s words and designs.

jchansdesigns.com

[auralynne.etsy.com](http://auralynne.etsy.com)  
[vixensdelight.etsy.com](http://vixensdelight.etsy.com)

A photograph of two women in Victorian Gothic clothing standing against a brick wall. One woman is wearing a red dress with a black lace overlay and a large black feathered hat. The other is wearing a purple dress with a black lace overlay and a purple feathered hat. A large, stylized script font "Greetings!" is overlaid on the image. Below it, text reads: "We're sisters, with a passion for making Victorian Gothic pretty things. In our shops you'll find clothing, hats and jewelry handcrafted to order. Mention Gothic Beauty for a free gift with your order! (minimum applies)"

A photograph of a woman in a Victorian Gothic outfit, including a top hat and a parasol, standing on a staircase. The outfit features a patterned jacket and a dark skirt. A text overlay at the bottom reads: "WWW.PHAZECLOTHING.COM".



# MYTHIC ART

Utilizing cutting-edge technology, Mythic Articulations is



Photos by Brian Richardson

# INCULATIONS

bringing their vision of mythology and folklore into reality



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*By Gail Brasie*



ythic Articulations began in late 2013 and is quickly growing in popularity. The man behind the company, Brian Richardson, creates models of skeletons of mythical creatures and cryptids—creatures that haven't been proved to exist in the wild. His designs are brought into the world by 3D Printing technology, and from there these charming models can make a home on your desk or bookshelf. Brian's models include El Chupacabra, the Jersey Devil, the Wolpertinger, Cerberus and many more. He also creates poseable models of many of his skeleton designs, that come packaged "In a Can" to the delight of his customers.

What's interesting is that Mythic Articulations almost started on a whim. Brian took his life-long interest in mythology and biology and married it with 3D printing, one of the fastest-growing methods of production. He learned about 3D printing after reading about it online, and from there decided to craft himself a bird skeleton. Brian says that "I chose the mythical Bare-Fronted Hood-wink, because there's really no way to get it wrong, since it's known for not being seen. After that I made the Chupacabra, and put them up for sale, and it took off from there."

Brian does everything, from the designing, the modeling, the packaging of the skeletons, as well as the company's website all on his own. It's all produced by him, except for the actual printing of the skeletons themselves, as he says "I outsource that to a local 3D printing bureau, since the printers they use cost as much as a house."

Brian chose 3D printing for production of his models because it offers the highest level of quality for what he makes. He says that "I use 3D printing because there is no other way for me to make the models with such a high level of detail, repeatedly. I could hand sculpt them from clay, but the amount of

time needed for that would make it impractical. Many of the forms, such as the rib cages, would be very difficult to reproduce with resin casting or injection molding.”

Once Brian has chosen a mythical creature or cryptid to feature as a model, Brian considers depictions and descriptions of it closely, and then figures out what real-world creature or creatures it most closely resembles. At that point, he does research into the skeletons of those real-life creatures and bases his own models off of those, with creative license. Some of his models’ designs take cues from an amalgamation of real-world animals, which he blends together in a realistic way. He cites his Jersey Devil model as an example of this, describing his depiction of the creature, based on research, as a cross between a horse and a bat. Brian brings up a good point when he says “most things have fairly similar skeletons, so it’s often a matter of getting the proportions right to make it look like just about anything.”

Mythic Articulations started selling poseable figures “In a Can” in August of 2014. The poseable pieces are very popular, and feature truly charming packaging. Brian says the figures fit perfectly in the cans, and that he was drawn to the vintagey snake-oil labels for aesthetic reasons. The first poseable piece was El Chupacabra, which Brian says he made primarily to find out if he could. The online response was so positive he made more. With the poseable figures, the parts are connected to sprues, which helps in printing. The models themselves are a snap-together design, and while Brian originally considered having all the bones on these models separated, he decided a snap-together design would be more accessible and user-friendly for his customers.

Brian says he cannot pinpoint exactly when his interest in mythology and cryptids began, but that it’s been part of him for a long time. When asked about whether he has a favorite area of folklore, Brian says “one of my favorites is the Wolpertinger, simply because it’s such an odd combination of parts that fit together so well.

**“HE  
LEARNED  
ABOUT 3D  
PRINTING  
AFTER  
READING  
ABOUT IT  
ONLINE,  
AND FROM  
THERE  
DECIDED  
TO CRAFT  
HIMSELF  
A BIRD  
SKELETON.”**

Philippine folklore has a lot of interesting and bizarre creatures as well.”

There’s a wide selection of skeletons available, from a variety of pantheons and cultures. There are some from Greek mythology, such as the aforementioned Cerberus, as well as the Minotaur and Pegasus, for example. He has vampire, mermaid and fairy models, a few Wyverns, as well as the Japanese Rokurokubi and Sleipnir from Norse mythology, and the Tikbalang of Philippine folklore too. Black Shuck is a kind of hell-hound from British popular lore, and the Mythic Articulation model of it is notable for being all black, rather than bone-white. Brian designs and adds new models on a regular basis, so it’s good to keep an eye out for his newest creations. He’s recently added a model of Cthulhu, the Wendigo and the Ozark Howler, and there will be more in the future.

Mythic Articulations is a good example of how curiosity and imagination can support you—Brian started creating models because he was curious and he wanted to challenge himself creatively. Ingenuity, quality and melding of several interests into a creative form are what spurred his company, rather than an aggressive business plan or driving ambition. He is self-taught and self-made, with an avid interest in learning and a great sense of humor.

Brian and Mythic Articulations are filling the desires of a market he may have not known existed. It’s marvelous that there are scores of people who are as interested in the figures Brian creates as he is; there is a whole community of people out there who are in love with mythical creatures and urban legends, and are more than happy to have a model skeleton of a mythical beast or creature on their desk, windowsill or shelf. Whether purely for decoration, or to kindle inspiration and imagination and the questioning for what could or might be, there is a model for just about everyone from Mythic Articulations.

[mythicarticulations.com](http://mythicarticulations.com)  
[etsy.com/shop/MythicArticulations](http://etsy.com/shop/MythicArticulations)

By Lenore Gwynn

**T**he British Library houses the largest number of catalogued items of any library in the world, with the oldest dating back as far as 2000 BC. Located in the heart of London this modern building holds a manuscript of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* by Lewis Carroll, as well as the sole surviving manuscript copy of the 7th Century poem *Berowulf*. As well as being a functioning research library, and a receiving a copy of every book produced in the UK for its collection, it also holds temporary exhibitions. One of the most recent focused on Gothic culture.

The beautifully titled 'Terror and Wonder' exhibit was literature heavy (not surprising given its location), but film posters, movie clips, gothic-inspired couture and photos of current gothic fashions were also included. Fittingly the exhibition opened in October last year and ran until mid-January, with extra open-

For gothophiles many of the influential names and titles will already be familiar - Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* - but some of the details behind them may not. It was these details that proved most interesting. Shelley's famous novel, which gave birth to the iconic image of a heavy-footed, undead monster with bolts through his neck and stitches on his head, was initially conceived while on holiday in Lake Geneva. The year before in 1815 Mount Tambora, off the Indonesian coast, erupted with a force so powerful it was the largest eruption in recorded history. The amount of dust projected into the atmosphere had huge effects worldwide, darkening the skies leading to crop failures, starvation, cannibalism and extreme weather, eventually giving rise to the 'Year Without a Summer'. It also had effects on our culture. This natural disaster drove Lord Byron to pen the poem *The Darkness*, but for Mary

Film Institute, included original sketches from *Hellraiser*, the terrifying Clive Barker film that introduced us to Pinhead, and an annotated script from Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. Accompanying the display on *The Wicker Man*, a film about human sacrifice and folk traditions, was a book illustrating how real life British druids burned their victims. Alexander McQueen, the fashion designer who popularized the skull image in clothing, was present too, as his Dante dress from a collection in 1996 loomed into view. As striking as the bejeweled dress was, other more traditional gothic items were just as intriguing. The Victorian vampire hunting kit on loan from the Royal Armouries was an awesome piece - complete with stakes and crucifix in a convenient carrying case, for those evenings spent hanging around the graveyard. Towards the end the exhibition also gave a nod to the goth scene in its current state, with a display of photographs from Whitby

# TEROR & WONDE at the British Library

ing times added due to the high demand from visitors. The exhibit was born from a desire to explain our enduring fascination with the macabre. Why, after the birth of gothic literature 250 years ago, are we still enthralled with the darker side of life (or death)? What is it about the monsters that capture our interest? How does gothic art, literature and fashion manifest itself today?

Gothic literature has always been said to remind us of the dark side within each of us, the Mr. Hyde to our Dr Jekyll, but as vampire films and zombie TV shows show no sign of abating in popular culture, gothic themes still seem close to our hearts. The exhibition began with what is considered the first gothic novel, *The Castle Of Otranto* by Horace Walpole - a tale of love and death (the twin axes of any gothic story), locked towers, princesses and confusing family trees. From that novel the history of British gothic culture follows.

Shelley it gave her the reclusiveness to create the precursor to *Frankenstein*. While stuck inside her villa on the shores of Lake Geneva, as thunderstorms raged as a result of the eruption, she dreamed of an inanimate body coming to life and it terrified her.

A while after, *Frankenstein* came to being. Now famous novelist Bram Stoker used to work in a theatre and was inspired by a vampire production popular at the time, to write his own story. He used the British Library to research vampire legends and folklore as he created the blood sucking tale to end all others, *Dracula*.

As well as the expected literary examples there were displays of the gothic from all aspects of culture. Pieces of film memorabilia, some on loan from the British

Goth Weekend. It was encouraging to see that the modern-day Goth had been included, but that inclusion would probably draw a sigh from many within the scene. The photos of attendees at WGW illustrate what most people



Pictured above is an authentic Vampire Hunting Kit on display.  
Pictured right is from the Gothic Literature Poster.

# ER

think of when they think 'goth' nowadays, and for some that is fast approaching cliché.

After purchasing the exhibition book and other frivolous gothic-themed knick knacks, there was still no conclusion as to why people love a good gothic tale or what it is that maintains our fascination with the macabre. The key themes in this dark subculture are love and death, which everyone can relate to and are both parts of life that no one really understands. Perhaps it is this mystery that keeps people coming back, to try to explore it through stories and film and, ultimately, through our own self-expression.

[www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)





HELENE HA



AWTHORNE

By Gail Brasie

Kristine of Helene Hawthorne Fashions is a whirlwind of activity; working as a pastry chef and a designer offering a huge range of different looks, from separates to ornate costumes. She kindly agreed to talk to *Gothic Beauty* about her latest creations and photo-shoot.

Helene Hawthorne Fashions' newest collection is drawn from the heart of the four seasons, each design displaying the moods and undertones of a season, but not in a strictly conventional way. Fall is an ethereal, fitted gown that flares at the bottom in a terrace of ruffles, constructed of light fabrics and a carefully blended array of colors. Like Fall itself

(depending on where you live) the colors suggest both warmth and the oncoming of winter. The colors for Fall are earth-tones, but with shimmer and a hint of fantasy; golds, shimmery browns, apricots, and fawns. With the makeup and extraordinary hair, the look is elegant and somewhat stark but hinting at the feral and wild. It's restrained but fierce.

The Spring look is more playful, more flirtations, featuring pastels and a shorter hemline. The tulle accent along the bottom and volume in the skirt give the look a girlishness, while the snug-fitting, skin-baring tops allow for a more 'grown-up' look. This could be an Easter dress, or one for a fantastical tea-party. Summer's gown is full-on daring, the barely-exis-

tent top is underscored by the demure fabric and color and the full, glamorous skirt.

Winter's look maintains the elegance of the other seasons, but with a blunt, melancholic starkness the others lack. This dress boasts thicker fabric and foot-to-neck coverage except for artful banding on the upper torso, and bare arms.

There's something mutable about all these looks; the clothes give the wearer room to move and reflect moods that shift like the seasons themselves. A wearer can go bright or dark with accessories, makeup and hair, wearing the same dress over and over while telling a different story each time.

When I asked Kristine about her sources of inspiration and how ideas for designs come to her, her response reveals that they come to her unbidden, and their source is hard for her to pin down. She says that "it's almost impossible for me to say what inspires me. Everything can if I see or hear it at the right moment. I don't know what initially inspired the four seasons. I just know that I wanted them to be dark and the challenge of making summer gloomy inspired me to do the shoot."

This numinous stream of ideas may also explain, at least in part, her widely diverse and varied creations. Kristine says that her designs are often not planned, but come to her as they do; she sees what they are in her head at the time and then makes them. Creativity like this is both rare and a blessing, and Kristine has no dearth of ideas.

There's something instinctual about the way Kristine approaches different fabrics. She says that "they all speak to me. They tell me what they want to be, but my favorite is silk. A new favorite is cotton. I don't know if any materials are challenging if you use them with the right garment. They become difficult if you try to force them to do something they were not made to do." She draws the designs out of the fabric, and follows them without forcing it down an artistic path that it doesn't 'want' to go. It's a bit magical, and a bit dreamlike. The idea that the fabric and materials Kristine >

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> works with “speak” to her indicate a creative relationship with the elements of her craft which opens up different ways to view both her designs and clothing construction in general.

Collaboration plays a role in Helene Hawthorne Fashions as well. The designs are her own, but often during photoshoots she works behind-the-scenes and incorporates the ideas of others to create a feeling and mood to best display the clothes. For the Four Seasons photoshoot, Kristine worked closely with makeup artist Lauren of LC Hair and Makeup to determine the look of the shoot. Of this process, Kristine says “for the Seasons shoot I started with an idea and made some dresses. Then Lauren met with me at my design studio and I explained the thoughts I had about the shoot. She came up with the makeup and hair ideas. Then we both did the props and planned the overall mood of the shoot. It was a totally collaboration from start to finish.”

Lauren describes how Kristine outlined the mood and tone she wanted while giving Lauren a lot of creative freedom in how that was done. While the two of them planned the shoot together and separately in advance, as often happens, ideas were morphed and added to during the actual shoot in an act of spontaneous creativity. Lauren says that “initially I had the entire look for hair and makeup for each model and over the course of the shoot, I decided to ramp it up a bit. The skull in the hair for one model and the black shadow kind of overcoming the model were all added in as I went. It’s really crazy to be inspired as you shoot because it means the entire production takes a turn and ends up looking ten times better than you thought it would. I’m extremely happy with the way it all came to be.”

A stylistic theme that runs through this and other Helene Hawthorne Fashions’ photoshoots is the presence of fantastically big, intentionally messy hair, which is a glorious thing and something the goth subculture has a history with. The hair is gorgeous for its own sake, but it also adds to the feel and ambiance of the photos. It brings to mind something a bit wild, uncontrolled, and juxtaposed next to her designs suggests the mutability of a look with hair and accessories. Sometimes Kristine herself does the hair for a photoshoot, sometimes the MUA does it. Kristine cites her mother’s working as a hair stylist during the 1970s as the start of her love of big hair, saying that her mother used “to do my hair into beehives when I was young. I loved big hair then too.”

Kristine has experience with fashion shows, having participated in several, which she describes as “fun and a lot of work.” Recently she participated in a fashion show at the Seattle Steampposium, an inaugural event featuring fashion shows, live entertainment, vendors, a very classy tea-party, and other Steampunk goodness.

Always moving forward, Kristine has more in the works for Helene Hawthorne Fashions. In addition to the elaborate costumes and gorgeous separates Kristine offers she’s also planning to do “more casual comfy clothing made from organic cottons and sustainable fabrics like bamboo. Costumers will likely see a lot more of that in my Etsy shop...” So be on the lookout for new and beautiful creations from this active, vibrant designer.

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STUDS & SPIKES

## VVSUK Handmade Pocket-Sized Journal

This handmade, pocket-sized diary by the Victorian Vampire Society UK is perfect for jotting down thoughts, dreams, bits of poetry or even your to-do and grocery lists when you're out and about. It's quite small, length-and height-wise, about 3 inches by 4 inches, so it can be stored in a pocket, bag or purse very easily. The journal features a limp-leather wrap binding, which makes this journal very lightweight, a leather thong wraps along the journal to keep it closed. The wrap binding also has a delicate hand-tooled decoration along the borders, as well as the Victorian Vampire Society UK logo in crimson on the cover. The journal contains about 100 leaves, so

200 pages if you write on front and back. The edges of the text block are decorated with red ink, adding to the stately and romantic red-and-black theme. The pages themselves are a fetching off-white color, and I had no issue with ink bleeding through the opposite side of the page when writing, which is a major plus. This little journal has accompanied me everywhere since I received it, and I use it frequently. Aside from its utility, the journal is very attractive too, I've gotten a handful of compliments from friends and family when they see it, the only downside of which is the necessity of handing over the journal for inspection and

admiration by aforementioned, even if you're still in the middle of writing. It makes for a terrific gift for poets, list-makers and writers of all stripes who want to put their thoughts down in style.

**\$25.86**

[ETSY.COM/SHOP/VVSUK](https://www.etsy.com/shop/VVSUK)

GAIL



## Paperself 'Tattoo Me' 'Lace Me Up'

Who would have thought that the cheesy transfer 'tattoos' of our youth would one day grow up and become fashionable? The garish bloody daggers and clichéd oriental dragons are long gone, as is their very temporary nature. Transfer tattoos have become an extension of a make-up routine, an extra accessory to wear when doing something special, and British company Paperself have created a number of temporary tattoos that are anything but naff. They have expanded their body accessories range from delicate paper eyelashes to include 'tattoo' bracelets, necklaces and whimsical vintage images for use just about anywhere. The 'Wonderland Ring' is designed for use on the hands and includes playing card and white rabbit designs while the 'Jewelled Fox' set contains a black and white Victorian style necklace print and a vintage Fox head wearing a crown. A number of the design sheets are reminiscent of old china

patterns. With the right care these temporary tattoos can last 2–4 days and are FDA approved. Most packs include two sheets of transfers, but as Paperself remark, the tattoos can be cut and used piece by piece, however and wherever the fancy takes. The 'Lace Me Up' bracelet is of ample length, is very detailed and actually contains four bracelets, two of each design and retails for around \$9. With the bracelets especially, it may help to have an extra pair of hands when applying as you need to hold the paper on your skin and wet with a damp cloth (a little tricky when applying the transfer to an arm!). It is recommended to be thorough and patient while applying the transfer, to ensure it sticks fully. Great for those who want to dabble in body art, or those who want to extend their real tattoos for the night.

[PAPERSELF.COM](http://PAPERSELF.COM)

LENORE

# Clive Barker Collection by Black Phoenix Alchemy Labs

When you imagine the horror mastermind that gave us the twisted and depraved worlds of Hellraiser and Nightbreed, a line of custom perfume oils may not be the first thing that comes to mind. However, thanks to the olfactory geniuses at Black Phoenix Alchemy Lab you can now enjoy an additional sensory insight into the novelist and artist's literary world. Consisting of three distinct fragrances entitled "Foolish Vacuous", "The Day Burned White", and "Sweets to the Sweet" the limited collection is a strange combination of florals and sugary notes with deeper earthy elements that surprise the senses. "Foolish Vacuous"



is the strongest fragrance of the three and the closest resembling a classic perfume—strong and demanding and sexy. "The Day Burned White" is clean and unexpected with notes of

lily and melon and, as it fades, a mustiness that reminds me of old paper or parchment. "Sweets to the Sweet" smells exactly how you would expect it to: sweet with elements of vanilla, spice, and citrus. Overall, the Clive Barker Collection is a pleasant variety of feminine fragrances that blend well with one's skin. They also maintain their distinct scents while not being

overpowering. Each vial of oil is \$26 and available at

[blackphoenixalchemylab.com](http://blackphoenixalchemylab.com)

GABRIELLE

## Filigree Bat Necklace and Bracelet with Swarovski Crystals

The Gift Crypt owner Sarah Doucette makes some gorgeous jewelry. Her bat charms are made of antique silver, giving them a nice heft and subtle shine. They're done in a simple silhouette style, which is refreshing since gothic jewelry can tend to get a bit gaudy. To keep them from looking too plain, however, the wings have filigree designs punched out of them, giving them a touch of class. Each charm is also adorned with a single Swarovski crystal. You can choose from black, red, or purple for the crystals. The bats come as a set of seven on a necklace, or a single one on a bracelet. The jewelry also comes neatly packaged in a red box with a silver bow, perfect for surprising that special someone.

My set came with black crystals, and the black/silver combo looks very gothy but is neutral enough to go with many outfits. The necklace fit perfect-

ly, with the top hanging down just below my collar bone and the bottom sitting just above the plunge of my shirt. Unfortunately, the bracelet was another matter. I have small wrists, and the default size was too small even for me. I tried hooking the closure to the end of the decorative clasp tail and it made the bracelet much too large. The chain in-between these two clasp spots is very tiny and hard to hook the closure on, making it hard to achieve a medium size. If you have your heart set on the bracelet or the matching set, it might be worth contacting Doucette for custom sizing. Otherwise, stick with the necklace. It's beautiful enough to stand on its own anyways.

**\$20.83**

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MELISSA

## STAFF PICK

### Yankee Candle Black Cat Range

The scented wax ty-coons over at Yankee Candle have a range of candle holders and burners which speak to the cat-loving goth in all of us. All three items use the classic black cat shape to great effect—the best being the wax melt burner. All feature a gloss black kitty, with orange burning eyes, his back arched and his long tail curled above him. A circle of black cats, nose-to-tail, has been designed to hold a Yankee candle jar, and is particularly effective when the candle has burnt halfway, leaving the flame to flicker behind the cats, casting silhouettes on the wall. There is also a tea light holder, the same black cat holds a small candle in his back—you can even hold him by the head and tail when moving already

burning lights! The best piece in the set is Yankee's take on the traditional oil burner. They sell scented solid waxes that melt over a tealight, solidifying again when the candle burns out. The glossy cat holds a candle in his back, while his tail suspends the melting dish over it. The 'wax melts' promise around 8 hours of scent, but the wax itself lasts much longer, meaning you could add essential oils to them to re-perfume them. The Black Cherry and Black Coconut ones are great, as is the Mid Summers' Night, which has a decidedly gothic full moon on the label. The only negative is that a standard tea light seemed too short to effectively heat the wax melts, so an extra holder had to be put in place to 'boost' it up to the dish.

[yankeecandle.com](http://yankeecandle.com)

LENORE



FASHION



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*By Makissa Phillips*

**AMF Korsets takes the term “wearable art” to a very literal and awe-inspiring level**



Using leather as his artistic tool of expression, artist Louis Fleischauer creates pieces that cater to dark fashion tastes while also provoking thought and conversation. Originally specializing in corsets but now offering additional accessories such as wings, eyepatches, and handbags, AMF Korsets' pieces clothe the wearer while also telling a story.

It was at age 19 that Fleischauer first discovered the wonders of working with leather. He was making clothing and sculptures with a variety of other fabrics, but he explains that "leather is a material that 'talks' to me when I work with it." Fleischauer's skills are particularly impressive when you take into account his upbringing. He grew up in Eastern Germany where finding subculture-related resources was an impossibility. Taking matters into his own hands, Fleischauer says "I had no other choice then to make my own clothing. I was forced to be creative and this really helped me on my way to becoming an artist. Everything I know about Art and Fashion, I created myself, with the help of some friends." >

Photo by Alex Blyg

> With a DIY attitude, Fleischauer got to work, citing multiple sources of inspiration. Nature is one of the main sources he cites, saying that he takes inspiration from things such as snakes, bugs, trees, and especially things he finds during his travels through the rainforest. Other sources of inspiration include dreams, body art rituals that he performs on stage, as well as social problems occurring in our world. For example, his "Gaia Violation" collection—featuring pieces portraying organic beauty mixed with aspects of deconstruction and suffering—were inspired by environmental pollution, while his edge "Recycled Religion" pieces were inspired by religious fanaticism.

Considering the complexity of his work, it would make sense that Fleischauer would not want to put constricting labels on his art or box it into one category, however, but he does identify himself as a part of the Dark Arts movement. As a participant in the movement he has witnessed a lot of evolution throughout the years, some of which leaves him displeased and questioning. "As for the evolution, it has definitely entered the main stream, which is good in a way that it makes living as an artist much easier. The downside is, most of the art these days is washed down in order to not offend any potential customers." As he witnesses this shift in the movement, as well as art in general, Fleischauer can't help but question the lasting effects of the direction we are headed in. He goes on to say, "there is a lot of self-censorship in social networks out of fear for being shut down. We now live in a world without nipples. I wonder what this does to the human psyche?"

Take a look at the work created under the AMF Korsets brand you will clearly see that Fleischauer possesses a bravery in terms of his willingness to express himself artistically. His work is raw, striking, even at times challenging to the wearer and the viewer alike. Fleischauer explains that he gives his creations a "raw and "dirty" feel because "sterility destroys us. The element of chaos is an antidote to society's obsession with order."

Describing his process and intent more in-depth, Fleischauer explains that his creations are made to transform the wearer. He creates his designs as a means to help the individual "leave the daily routine behind and empower the person to be more in touch with their internal world." To attain his desired result, he uses organic shapes and colors because, as we sometimes need to be



Photo by Martin Pelzer



reminded, “we are organic beings.”

Looking at Fleischauer’s body of work, you will notice that there is a great deal of care and detail in each piece. Many of his pieces have specific storylines and character stories attached to them. He explains, “Many of the pieces I created over the past 3 years interact in one way or another with each other. He says that he has plans for a larger art installation, combining his stories and designs along with performance, but he goes on to say “I need to see if I can find the right place for this in time for me to be still in the right headspace.” Whether or not fans will get to experience Fleischauer’s artistic vision fully realized, it’s exciting to see that all of these different ideas from different artistic mediums go through his mind when he creates his pieces. With that said, it’s apparent that his talents and abilities are far-reaching and cannot be easily summed up in one simple word or job description. He’s not simply a designer, sculptor, or storyteller. When asked to self-identify, he states “Sometimes, when I’m in a special mood, I call myself a *Flesh Explorer*, but at the end of the day, I’m simply an Artist.”

With Fleischauer’s many talents, his hard work and passion do not go unnoticed. He’s worked with bands such as In Strict Confidence and Matthew Setzer from London After Midnight. He’s also contributed to mainstream projects such as *Germany’s Next Top Model* and *True Blood*. His work on a joint project with Annie Bertram at the H.R. Geiger Museum in Switzerland, however, is what he considers his most satisfying endeavor.

As for what lies ahead in the future, Fleischauer says that he recently came back from a trip to the rainforest, which fans can anticipate may lead to exciting new pieces. “[I] have many ideas in my head for new projects based on the forms and energies I encountered there. Some of those pieces might be shown at the Vanilla Gallery in Japan this summer.” He also came out with a book a few months back titled *Flesh Art* which includes interview, photos and a manifesto. Fleischauer describes the book as being a good reflection of his work throughout the past ten years.

You can find some of Fleischauer’s creations in person at select boutiques in Europe and Asia. As you delve deeper into Fleischauer’s works, philosophy, and art, prepare to be transformed.

[amfkorsets.com](http://amfkorsets.com)

# Game of Thrones inspired make-up

By Kristine Rose

Photos **Mark Raker**  
Make Up **Kristine Rose**  
Model **Julia Khoroshilov**

It's 2015, 19 years since George R.R Martin published the first installment of the beloved *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, and Winter is still not here. *The Winds of Winter*, that is. The much anticipated sixth novel in the series still has no concrete release date, and fans everywhere are crazed in withdrawal. I've re-read the whole series, studied *A World of Ice and Fire* until I knew the geography of Westeros better than the geography of the US (I am admittedly not great at the geography of the US),

and scoured the message boards to find out who is a secret Targaryen. Still...my heart...it aches. And like every deep, dark, void within myself, I've decided to fill it with make-up.

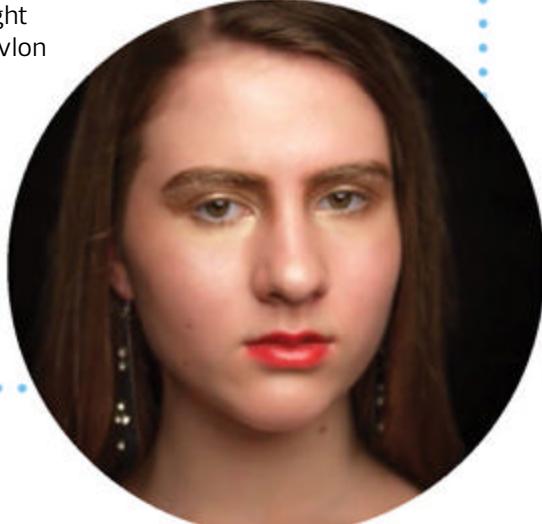
I've created a few different looks to compliment the spirits of the main houses, Targaryen, Stark, Lannister and Baratheon to help hold you over. We're all in this together and we need each other.

**For all looks:** Apply a brightening primer all over your face to even out your skin (Make Up Forever Step 1 Skin Equalizer in Radiant Blue). Then apply a full coverage concealer (Make Up Forever Full Cover Concealer in your skin tone) under the eyes, around the nose, and on any spots or discolorations. Take a highlighter (Becca Shimmering Skin Perfector in Moonstone) and tap it along your cheekbones and down the center of your nose. Use an eyeshadow base all over lids (Bare Minerals Prime Time Brightening Eyelid Primer) since these will be eye shadow centered looks. Finish all looks with a setting spray for longevity (Urban Decay All Nighter).

## LANNISTER

- Take a shimmering gold shadow (MAC Eyeshadow in Gorgeous Gold) and swipe it across your whole lid, from lash line to brow bone.
- Use a slightly lighter gold shade (MAC Eyeshadow in Butterscotch) and swipe it under your eyes from your lower lash line till it meets with the high lighter on your orbital bone.
- For brows, take a darker bronze shade and fill them in with a slanted brush (Urban Decay Baked). Take the lightest gold shade and add a bit on top of the bronze to give the color some dimension.
- Leave lashes mascara free and dust them with a light coat of the medium gold shadow for a softer look.
- Line lips with a bright scarlet lip pencil (Revlon Colorstay Lipliner in Red).
- Follow with a shiny red gloss (MAC Russian Red).

1





### **BARATHEON**

- Take a medium shimmery taupe shade of eyeshadow (Sephora Colorful Eyeshadow Shimmer in Tiramisu) and swipe it all over your lid from lash line to crease.
- Use lighter gold shade (MAC Eyeshadow in Butterscotch) and swipe it under your eyes from your lower lash line till it meets with the highlighter on your orbital bone.
- Fill in brows with a darker brown metallic shade (Nars Single Eyeshadow in Mekong).
- Layer a shimmery light brown over the medium taupe on the lid from lash line to crease (Bobbi Brown Eye Shadow in Wheat).
- Curl lashes and apply a brown mascara (Dior Diorshow Mascara in Catwalk Brown).
- Apply a warm mauve blush on cheeks with a kabuki brush (Tarte Amazonian Clay 12 Hour Blush in Dazzled).
- Apply a satin brownish pink lipstick to lips (Nars Lip Pencil in Bansar).

2

### **TARGARYEN**

- Fill in brows with a darker brown metallic shade (Nars Single Eyeshadow in Mekong).
- Sweep a metallic rosy brown shade from lash line to brow bone (Urban Decay Naked 3 Palette shade Liar).
- Layer a matte warm red over the rosy brown on the lid from lash line to crease (Make Up Forever Artist Shadow in Morello Cherry).
- Line under your lower lash line with a metallic silver liquid eyeliner (Ciate Liquid Chrome Metallic Eyeliner in Sci-Fi).
- Curl lashes and apply a brown mascara (Dior Diorshow Mascara in Catwalk Brown).

3

- Apply a light nude blush on cheeks with a kabuki brush (Tarte Amazonian Clay 12 Hour Blush in Exposed).
- Apply a metallic marsala shade of lipstick on lips (try Nars Lip Pencil in Club Mix).

### **STARK (pictured page 40, left)**

- Fill in brows with a light metallic brown shade (Mac Eye Shadow in Coquette).
- Apply a metallic light silver shadow all over lids from lash line to brow bone (MAC Eye Shadow in Forgery.)
- Add the same shade under the lower lash line.
- Swipe a dark metallic grey shade in the crease from the middle of the upper lash line to the outer corner of the eye (Urban Decay Eyeshadow in Gunmetal).
- Curl lashes and apply a silver glitter mascara (e.l.f. Essential Glitter Mascara in Silver).
- Add some silver glitter eyeliner to your brows (Urban Decay Heavy Metal Glitter Liner in Glamrock).
- Use the same silver glitter eyeliner and dot it under eyes, around your temples, and just a over your brows for an icy look.
- For a just bitten lip look use a natural red lip stain (Benefit Benetint ).

4

These looks would be great for a night out or even a Game of Thrones viewing party. May the best house win.

By Kirsty Evans

**W**ith a back catalogue of 220 published songs and as many again that are yet to be released, South African vocalist Ashton Nyte is so prodigiously creative that just one band couldn't contain him. After a move to the US prompted by his marriage to artist Rose Mortem, The Awakening frontman has a new solo album on the way and plenty to talk about.

Hi Ashton! Now that *Some Kind of Satellite* is out where do you go from here? Are you planning a tour?

Yes. I've just been invited to play some shows with Wayne Hussey, that's back in South Africa in May, and I've just added some solo shows too that will be a bit more intimate and theatrical. We've already started booking for the US after that and we're very keenly looking at Europe for the end of the year.

Obviously The Awakening is still an ongoing project for you too. Is there a solid lineup that's been the same for a while or is it just you plus other people as needed?

It's both in that the band lineup has changed over the years multiple times and I am the songwriter, and I play all the instruments on almost all of the albums. That's

not to say that it's Ashton and friends, whoever's around, just that we've been around for a while and lineups change. People get married, these things happen. It's more of a natural evolution of a band line-up.

The reason I'm asking is that it if was just Ashton and friends then why the need for the solo project?

That's a very good question; I've asked myself the same thing. It was very much a case of The Awakening being very well branded for what it was and what it continues to be, and I just felt as a compulsive songwriter who just literally cannot seem to satiate my need to create music it wasn't realistic to put it all under one umbrella. I was writing music that simply just doesn't feel like the same band.

That actually leads into my other question which was that though with The Awakening albums people basically know what they're going to get with your solo albums it's not so much working out that way, is it?

No, and to bring this back to your original question this album feels like a sort of homecoming in a sense in that I feel when I listen to it that I can hear various shades and snippets and personality traits of things that I've done >

A SHOTHORN YESTERDAY



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> throughout my career, whether it be solo or as The Awakening.

**It feels like a more holistic expression as opposed to a side project, which some of the solo albums have very much fallen into. So you're completely correct in saying that the solo albums have kind of been all over the**

**place. And I don't mean that in a bad way, I just mean what whereas The Awakening is more cohesive the solo albums have been much more diverse in scope.**

Yes, and I think they will continue to be, but in a way that makes more sense. I think that my latent theatricality and my melodrama

any my love for all things glamorous, I'm more OK with that. I think I was trying to figure things out for a while, and I think that I've figured them out through music. That's what I do. I don't keep a journal – my songs are my journal. A lot of these songs on *Satellite* have been written over the last few years and this album has nearly come out a couple of times and then I sort of add something to it or I decide what the next one's going to sound like, and I think I just decided to put this out and to start performing in a solo fashion again and just kind of go where it leads me as opposed to trying to figure out which market works with what and all of that stuff.

**That was a related thought. If you're writing all the time then how do you figure out, OK, this one is an Awakening song and this one is for a solo project, or we'll figure out which project later on? Or do you write more in phases?**

Again, good question. I think it was more obvious to me in the past because the solo albums were so far removed from The Awakening. When I wrote "Dirt Sense" I was entirely enamored with all things Lou Reed at the time and I wanted that grittiness and that lack of production to come through. It was very apparent to me that when I'm writing that way and almost assuming a character then that guy is not the guy who sings "The Dark Romantics" in The Awakening so it was a lot clearer. It was less clear when I started with The "Slender Nudes" because that is very glamorous both in appearance and in subject matter. So to answer your question sometimes it's really clear and sometimes it isn't. Usually there's a polarizing thing that happens and I can say, OK, this really feels like the unit, and generally speaking up until now that has been more clear with The Awakening work, and I'm kind of excited that it's becoming clear with the solo work in an ongoing fashion.

**Do you feel like the sound that you have on this album represents that direction that you're going to be going in for a while?**

I think that it's a sound that makes sense to people who know The Awakening and who're familiar with the kinds of things that I do, and I have written at least 2 albums in addition to this with material that could effectively be put out as Part 2 and Part 3. At this stage I'm really just seeing how people respond to it and deciding the best way to share things with people.

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# "IT'S AMAZING HOW WHEN YOU REVISIT SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW IS OFTEN BORN OUT OF THAT."

**It sounds like you're in a transitional period in terms of your work, and I'm wondering how that relates to the fact that you moved to an entirely different continent. Doing that has a way of making you reassess who you are and where you fit.**

There's definitely an impact there. I think the style of the album itself, with its retro flavors that it has, a lot of that was my wife's influence. At the moment this new chapter began there was a rediscovery of things that we both enjoyed, and I think a lot of that filtered through in the music. There were a handful of songs that were written before; "Dressing Like You" was written a good 7 or 8 years ago. It's a song I've just sat on for years and waited for the right context for it, because to me it's the beginning of a story. I always felt that it would be the flagship song for an album; I just didn't know exactly what the album was. So fast forward a couple of years and I'm here and rediscovering these things and it's informing the music and I'm realizing how much I enjoy certain things that I'd forgotten about. It's amazing how when you revisit something old something new is often born out of that. We sometimes confuse progress with divorcing ourselves from our pasts and I don't think that's particularly healthy.

**I'm kind of curious as to why you draw such a clear line between The Awakening and your solo work given that you're really the lynchpin there too.**

I don't really know. It might be me most of the time in the studio but I've always thought about it in the band context and I guess that has involved decisions on how to play and where to play and who's coming to the show. That's not to say that I don't think about it with this, it's just that it's more of a theatrical interpretation rather than let's get the crowd jumping. I feel like I'm not really answering your question but maybe it's because this is a transition phase as it is. I mean, the album's called *Some Kind of Satellite*. A satellite is synonymous with communication, whether it's communicating with others or finding out more about yourself. A satellite is also removed, it's isolated, and there are themes of desolation and isolation in there as well, so there's that juxtaposition that I'm always drawn to. Who knows, maybe everything will ultimately amalgamate.

**It seems like you've drawn a line in your head, but it's a line that only exists because you drew it.**

I've always been interested in parallel, rather than sequential, artistic output and expression. I started releasing solo albums at the height of The Awakening's popularity, which some may have considered to be career suicide. I enjoyed how the juxtaposition of presentation, styles, characters and aesthetics effectively broadened my creativity and output and how one branch fed or informed the other, often ironically. It was a kind of forced yet accidental thinking-out-of-the-box routine, complete with a different backdrop, different band members, venues and different shades of nail polish.

**To wrap things up, you said that you were sitting on a couple of albums worth of material that's related to this album and trying to figure out what to do with it. For people who listen to Satellite and love it and who'd like to hear more in the same vein, what's the status on that material?**

At this point I'm tentatively looking at putting out a companion to it and literally calling it *Other Satellites*. I've got at least 10 or 12 tracks that I think are as strong and would make sense to people who enjoy this. Or I'll just go completely crazy and make it a double CD and put out everything.

[ashtonnyte.com](http://ashtonnyte.com)

The image shows the front cover of a book titled "A Cold-Hearted Phoenix" by Tragic Books. The cover features a woman with dark hair and smoky eye makeup looking intensely at the viewer. She is wearing a necklace with a large, dark pendant. The title is written in a stylized, gothic font. Below the title, it says "ILLUSTRATED MINISERIES IN 3 EPISODES". The background of the cover is a dark, moody illustration.

The image is an advertisement for Mystic Crypt. It features a woman with red hair and a black spiderweb top. The text on the ad includes "Mystic CRYPT", "Plus Sizes Small-5X", "Clothing, Hosiery, Jewelry, Purses, Decor and more!", "Gothic Renaissance Rockabilly Medieval", "Dark Star", "Eternal Love", "Dare to Wear", "HELL BUNNY", "Gothic Tripp", "Spin Doctor", "10% Off any purchase use coupon code GOTHICBEAUTY15", and a QR code. The website "www.MysticCrypt.com" and phone number "951-854-8892" are also present.



*By Gail Brasie*

## Forlorn, melancholic and profoundly, divinely, beautiful: The artwork of Jessica Dalva

Jessica Dalva is a rising star in the world of art. Working across mediums, her art has been featured in multiple gallery shows, as well as in theater productions, stop-motion films, and in the book *Spectrum 21*, where her piece "Don't Mind Me" was nominated in the "Dimensional" category. The images included in *Gothic Beauty Magazine* offer only a glimpse into her body of work. This Los Angeles-based artist works tirelessly, translating thoughts, emotions and emotional shifts into gorgeous, often for-

lorn, and sometimes mythic sculptures, illustrations, mixed-media, as well as puppetry and figures for stop motion animation.

Educated at the prestigious Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, California, Jessica specialized in Illustration. She says that "I wanted to learn how to draw, paint, learn anatomy, and tell stories without words, and illustration was the major for that." As she went through school she explored other mediums, prompted in part by "restlessness," and a need to express thoughts and dreams into different art-forms, and also out of a strong desire to learn as much

as possible. She started taking more classes in sculpture, branching out and developing her talents, and now works across the board as far as mediums go.

On what she tries to capture in her artwork, Jessica says that "I think personal disquiet, unknowns and uncertainty are major influences in what I create. I also am fascinated by the amorphous passage of time and the evolution of a person's life, both over long periods of time as well as momentary shifts in emotions. I often think of my work as trying to capture a singular thought or moment in the character's life."

She also desires to communicate with her audience through the feeling her artwork in-

# JESSICA



# DALVA

vokes. Jessica says that "my goal when creating something is to stir a feeling in another person, as a way for me to connect to others. One of my favorite things in the world is when I meet someone who tells me how something I made them feel, especially when it means something different than what it means to me."

Though each piece she makes is unique, there are common expressive and aesthetic elements that appear as recurring themes. Jessica says "I try to ask questions with my work that don't necessarily have an answer, but are still worth entertaining as an idea. I think that's why there

is a sort of continuity to most artists' work - there are thoughts we can't quite ever wrap our minds around, and so we try over and over to work out what they mean to us, rolling them around on our tongues until we are somewhat satisfied with the taste." In her sculptures, the figures' eyes tend to be milky and without pupils. Jessica says that she feels these unconventional-looking eyes "leave more to be open to the viewer's interpretation than a regular eye." Hands are often emphasized, and the figures are often accompanied by animals like coyotes and crows.



Redness around the nose and eyes appears too, and the figures in her sculpture seem to struggle with waves of intense thought or emotion.

The mood of the artwork is very often

forlorn, contemplative and sometimes fearful, but is also suggestive of the mythic and even the divine. Jessica says "I've been told that my work is very dark and creepy, which I can definitely see, but my point is more to make things that are lovely to me and have a significant meaning, and I think most people relate to darkness, in one way or another."

Jessica works with an impressive array of materials, including polymer, plastilina and ceramic clay, as well as gouache and watercolors for her two-dimensional artwork. In her sculpting, she will often add elements like tiny beads, branches, dried flowers, fabric and alpaca and goat hair, which she collects and organizes in order to keep the creative chaos at bay. Displaying in-depth and technical knowledge of each medium she uses, Jessica also expresses a curiosity to learn and master even more. She says that "I basically want to know how to work with as many materials as humanly possible - I have an insatiable curiosity when it comes to finding the perfect >



**Page 46 left to right:** "Barghest, or, Look After Me", "Eyrie, or, Clarity of Consequence", "Helix", "Involution, or, In The Quiet"

**This page:** "Per Aspera Ad Astra, or, We Never Lost Sight of the Horizon"

► materials, glues, techniques and secret tricks, I don't know if I'll ever quite find the ultimate material, but I will try everything. I have a secret dream to develop a new type of clay that is stronger, doesn't shrink, and doesn't smell horrible."

Instead of being overwhelmed by working in so many mediums, Jessica finds it energizing, as well as helpful for the development of all her art. On this point, she says that the "practice of each different medium informs the execution of another." She's learned about anatomy from life-drawing classes, for example, which translates into both her sculptures and drawings, reinforcing each form with new knowledge.

She has experience with puppetry and figures for stop motion films as well. Her puppets have been featured in theatrical productions. Jessica has a sharp interest in and love of puppetry, citing Jim Henson films such as *The Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth* as inspirations, and says she would love to do a film in that vein one day.

She is also drawn to stop motion animation, saying that the medium's scale and level of complexity fit her and her work perfectly. She goes on to say that "stop motion animation

has a certain dynamic quality to it that can only exist because of the unavoidable human error that naturally occurs with it. Because it is made up of real, tangible objects, touched and manipulated by tired hands over and over again, little magical blips and chatter occur that are nearly impossible to recreate with a computer which functions on ones and zeros."

Things are constantly moving forward for Jessica as she works and shows her art in a variety of galleries. Her latest gallery show, entitled "Hapax Legomena," was hosted at La Luz de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles and opened on May 1, 2015. An excerpt from her Show Statement, describing some of the process of creation and vision for the work, states, "the pieces are singular expressions of an idea, hapax legomena, in that they are representing distinctive concepts, as well as attempting to communicate the untranslatable through the imperfect language of art. The show focuses on one's relationship with oneself, internal wars, and the entanglements of love. The sculptures are a navigation through fears, moments of clarity and joy, and nightmares."

Jessica comments on how grateful she is that people come to see and buy her artwork.

Gallery showings are exciting and also a bit daunting, given the amount of intense work that goes into a solo and even a group show. They're also a risk, financially, a fear of all artists. The work leading up to a show can be downright exhausting; Jessica says she tends to become hermit-like during these months. And then there's the explosion of social and professional interaction at the gallery openings themselves, where she has an opportunity to talk about her art with other people.

With an intense desire to work and continually create, Jessica has even more plans moving ahead. She says that "in the future, I would like to work on larger sculptures and continue to explore new materials. I would love to create some more interactive pieces, things that move on their own or react to the viewer, and maybe make that puppet film someday. I want to know how to make everything, keep learning and creating until my hands get stiff and my eyes turn milky!"

jessicadalva.com  
etsy.com/shop/DalvaArt  
laluzdejesus.com

# GOTHIC HANDBAGS

*By Lenore Gwynn*

There was a time when all that was available to keep our keys and lipstick safe was plain, black leather. If you looked hard enough (or it had come into style in mainstream fashion) you could get something with studs or chains on it, if you were lucky. Halloween provided the perfect opportunity to 'repurpose' a candy collector, or fight small children for the latest *Nightmare Before Christmas* purse in the Disney Store. If none of those appealed, there was always decorating a plain purse with badges or patches. In my teens I acquired an old backpack and stitched laminated comic book pages and black lace to it, but my most memorable DIY purse was made from an ornate bird feeder (yes, you heard correctly). For the less creative (or frustrated) among us, alternative labels have released a slew of interesting, practical or just simply awesome gothic handbags in recent years that take the baggage out of bag hunting.

There are two novelty-shaped bags that every goth should own at least once in their life. The first is the classic Bat Bag. There are a lot for the batty to choose from on the market, including PVC bat-silhouettes, backpacks with leather wings and cute cartoon night-fliers. German label Re-Agenz have crafted a multi-way bag in brown and black faux fur, which can worn over the shoulder or as a backpack, either sleeping with wings wrapped round or spread out as if riding on your back. Banned have a more subtle bat-inspired purse with gorgeous bat-wing scallops to the top and corners and embroidered purple bats in flight on the front which is also available in white (the embroidery, not the bag. Don't be silly).

The second (some say iconic, others say clichéd) shape is the coffin. Alchemy Gothic make one in soft leather with a subtle cross and pewter design and chain strap. For something more attention grabbing one should investigate Kreepsville's range of gloriously un-dead handbags. The classic black coffin gets a dose of horror style with a bone-shaped handle, eyeball-print fabric inside and either studs, bones or vampire teeth adorning the outside. These guys don't do understated. On the flipside emerging brand Kill Star have taken the classic shape back to basics and kept things simple. Black PVC box bag with a silver chain strap and velvet lining. What more do >



Re-Agenz Bat Bag



Loungefly Lunch Box  
Alchemy Captainette Bag  
Kreepsville Coffin Bag



### > you need?

The rising popularity of Steampunk (or 'goths in brown') has given the everyday goth a new option of a satchel for day-to-day wear. Again Alchemy Gothic has released highly crafted leather bags, many available in black and silver color ways, as well as brown and brass. Although styled as old-fashioned Victorian 'Valises', the larger satchels come with all mod-cons including a mobile phone holder. For those who don't need to lug their laptop around every day, the smaller 'Captainette' purse is available. With a winged-cog badge on the front, the bag gives a nod to steampunk without going overboard. Relatively new brand Restyle from Poland have a more feminine version of the satchel, fashioned from velvet, brown satin and soft faux-leather. The focal point is the cameo on the main flap, depicting a death's head hawk moth. Subtle but still suitably gothic.

At the other end of the scale, for Goths of the non-Victorian, non-traditional persuasion, there are some labels that design outside the box. The Kreepsville Cleaver bag is now an iconic piece of horror-fashion (so much so that they have released a make-up bag version). This label proves that horror is for life, not just Halloween (and it can be practical too!). Day-glo legends Cyberdog have various crazy pvc, neon and inflatable bags, but their Angel purse comes in shiny black plastic too. It can be worn over the shoulder or as a backpack, giving the impression of folded wings. Shoe aficionados Iron Fist are known for their insane tattoo and graffiti inspired footwear, but their

bags are just as full of attitude. The American Nightmare bag is available in red or purple pvc, with punk skeletons 'scribbled' all over. It even has its' own corset - there's nothing much more goth than that.

Finally, a true 90s fashion piece is making a resurgence. Popularized by Marilyn Manson, who revealed he collected them, the metal lunchbox was used as a handbag by goths throughout the 1990s (I myself had five, including a 'Marvin The Martian' one). Usually known for their traditional skull designs on bags and pocketbooks, Loungefly have released a series of square lunchboxes too. Most feature variations on skulls and sugar skulls, but there are also the traditional gothed-up cartoon designs, including a red and black lace style Hello Kitty. Lunchboxes are a great alternative to a handbag, the only downside being that with overuse the catches can sometimes become loose only to spring open and spew the contents of your purse all over the floor. You have been warned.

So there you have it. From gothic staples like the Bat Bag and Coffin purse to vintage leather satchels and tin lunchboxes there is so much more choice than just asking 'does this come in black?' Just about anything can function as a purse, but with more alternative labels springing up and giving goths of the world hundreds of options to pick from, there is really is no reason to carry your daily accouterments in a bird feeder. Unless it's a really, really pretty one.

With thanks to: store.kreepsville666.com,  
shop.re-agenz.de, the-gothic-shop.co.uk, restyle.pl,  
shop.cyberdog.net

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## ASHTON NYTE

### SOME KIND OF SATELLITE

INTERVENTION ARTS



"Some Kind of Satellite", the most recent solo album from The Awakening's multi-talented, visionary frontman, Ashton Nyte, is a stunningly beautiful work. Nyte's music is the kind that inspires and ignites creativity in its audience, the desire to get out of the chair and do or make something of one's own. Nyte's creative energy is palpable, near infectious; this album crackles with it from beginning to end. His expressive baritone captivates, and climbs the register in a few places, and climbs back down into a subterranean booming of sound in others. His singing is deeply emotive while always maintaining dignity. Melancholic overall, this album has a Postpunk/New Wave feel and features songs about time, loss and loneliness. Nyte displays an emotional sensitivity that is entrancing and engaging. Key tracks include the heart-wrenching "Every Shade of Blue" about a friend long gone, and "Speak" with its deeply poetic lyrics and lovely heavy sound, and the addicting opening track "Dressing Like You." "Some Kind of Satellite" is a must-listen, from a wonderfully gifted and prolific artist.

**GAIL**

## DRIFTING IN SILENCE

### DESIRE

LABILE RECORDS



Drifting in Silence, a dark ambient and industrial project, is the work of one man, Derrick Stembridge, and his latest album "Desire" is a success from the beginning to the end. "Desire" is characterized by layers of sound, as Stembridge expertly layers and draws out lines of music, the listener is constantly engaged with this album, there's really no point where I lost interest. It's not a collection of blips and bleeps, but a thoughtfully constructed and arranged work. Sometimes there's even a bit of a groove sound on this album. In some ways "Desire" could very well be played in a club, but there is so much detail you would also want to listen to it in the quiet of your home.

Sonically rich and diverse, Stembridge's work is an intricate construction of sounds, mood, and rhythms. Some of his greatest strengths are in his sense of timing, and knowing exactly where and

when to place each disparate piece of the melody and harmony for the greatest effect. The first track "Until" has a minimal industrial feel to it. "Desire" is a great example of the richness of this album, and also features some guitar work as well, in addition to the electronic and synths. Also of note is the beautifully deep and ominous-sounding "Undercurrent." The album finishes with the gently beautiful and perfectly titled, "Echo."

**GAIL**

## ILYA

### IN BLOOD

ANA/KATA MUSIC



"In Blood" by San Diego based ILYA (not to be confused with the Bristol-based indie-folk/trip-hop group of the same name), is the latest release in a long time, and it is a grand return. "In Blood" is an overall mellow-feeling album, full of emotion that is restrained and tempered, rather than thrown at the audience. Themes of loneliness, insecurity and the desire for connection will resonate with a wide range of listeners. The group displays a judicious use of distortion as well. There is something soothing about this album in that exquisite, melancholic way. It maintains a beautiful atmosphere throughout, pairing primarily ethereal, feather-light vocals with heavier music. In general, the lighter vocals work terrifically against the backdrop of the music, although deeper, richer vocals come in on the track "Sanctuary" to good effect. "In Blood" hits its notes just right, an immensely satisfying album. Key tracks include "Isabel," "Another Day," "Storm," and "The Machine."

**GAIL**

## MOTHER OF SORROWS

II

56TH STREET RECORDS



This duo, comprised of Kronos and Jupiter Skab, is described as "Space Goth" on their label's website, and that's an apt description for the sound of this group. There's an abundance of synth and those low, slow, ponderous vocals that may put you in mind of earlier trad goth acts. They sing repeatedly about an entity called Zorgon. Vocally, there's a smattering of roaring, and some falsetto, and weird baby voices, primarily for effect, and primarily on the tracks "The Haunted Pool"

and "The Dark Lake" respectively. The cyber/spacey electronic music carries the vocals well, and the lyrics show a good deal of imagination and thematic connection between songs. The track "Child's Play" has a jazzy sound and "A Dreamer's Dream" is a strong opening that sets high expectations for the rest of the album. The last track, "Love Is a Strange Dungeon" recorded and produced by Michael Red, is a strong, danceable closing to a darkly fun, strange and weird album.

**GAIL**

## MURDER BY DEATH

### BIG DARK LOVE

BLOODSHOT RECORDS



"Big Dark Love" is alternative country band Murder by Death's seventh album, and this one utilizes a broader sound, with varied instrumentation and a wide array of moods and tones. Murder by Death has a talent for blending somewhat upbeat sounds with darker themes, although my personal favorites are their songs that are a bit darker throughout. A good example of the former is the opening track "I Shot and Arrow," and "Strange Eyes," while a good example of the latter is "Big Dark Love" which is beautiful in its simplicity. Additionally, the track "Dream in Red" has an addicting syncopation. As the album goes on more of their dark country sound comes to the fore. The track "Send Me Home" is a surprisingly tear-jerking song about death, and it took me off guard; perfectly balanced between melancholy, loneliness and connectedness, it became an unexpected and heartbreaking favorite track. Adam Turla's voice and performance are as strong as ever here. Very American in its themes, sound and lyrical imagery, "Big Dark Love" branches out a bit more than previous releases, losing a bit of its old rawness and wryness that were abundant on earlier albums.

**GAIL**

## UNLEASHED

### DAWN OF THE NINE

NUCLEAR BLAST



Viking death metallers get older, but they also get wiser and twenty five lengthy years on, Unleashed have proved why they're a band still relevant in the death metal scene. The twelfth studio album from the Swedish trailblazers continues telling the same story as their last two records and an-

nounces itself with the bellows of vocalist 'Johnny Hedlund' on 'A New Day Will Rise' and the thunderous riffs and powerful pounding drums which hit you instantly and hard.

This record drowns itself in guitar solos, with one being featured on almost every track and if it's clean vocals you're after, there aren't any. Thor springs to mind with the fast paced gallops of 'The Bolt Thrower', 'Let The Hammer Fly' and closing track 'Welcome The Son Of Thor' and there's a lot of growling rants on warriors, war battles and general viking culture, so if you're not a fan, then it's best you give this one a miss. The harshness of Johnny Hedlund's demonic chants and hisses on 'Where Is Your God Now?' and 'Dawn Of The Nine' show a darker more powerful side, while the record also visits a few dark atmospheric moments which I found to be more evident on 'Where Churches Once Burned'.

As far as death metal records go, 'Dawn Of The Nine' is definitely one to get the blood pumping, my prediction; a timeless classic for any death metal lover's collection.

**EMILY**

## MOONSPELL

### EXTINCT

NAPALM RECORDS



Some albums capture you from that first listen, and "Extinct" is one of them! The eleventh studio album from Portuguese gothic metal collective Moonspell really does show how they've evolved and from the opening track 'Breathe (Until We Are No More)' and its Turkish orchestral feature, it's clear the band have pushed their experimental boundaries in more than one direction.

The album plays tribute to some of the old Moonspell era but their signature gothic sound makes its presence known throughout the entirety of the record and for that we are grateful. The harshness of vocalist Fernando Ribeiro's tone on 'Malignia' and 'Funeral Bloom' creates an almost raw-like touch to the record's already existing dark and melodic structure, with oriental elements and guitar solos keeping things from refraining beyond the repetitive stage.

The band are evidently very instrumentally talented and the combination of extreme, screamed, and clean lyrics, with Portuguese passages heard on closing track 'La Baphomette' provides listeners with the right amount of variety to ensure that boredom stays at bay and for that reason alone it's worth a listen!

**EMILY**

## THY ART IS MURDER

### HOLY WAR

NUCLEAR BLAST



Australian death metal export Thy Art Is Murder, have managed to create a technical masterpiece in "Holy War".

round it's darker and has a faster pace, with ferocity hitting every corner; it's certainly not one for the light hearted, that's for sure. The record's opener greets listeners with a slightly longer intro but 'Absolute Genocide' is precisely what's needed to kick off an album this thunderous.

The band stated that they "wrote about concerns of ours, real issues, hardships that people are facing around the world today" and it's clear throughout, that lyrics are both meaningful and hard-hitting, clearly pointing to issues such as racism, homophobia and child abuse, with religious elements still present. Arguably title track 'Holy War' and 'Deliver Us To Evil' are standout tracks, however, at times the tracks can become quite indistinct, with hardly a breath shed between each one, but nonetheless it's a solid record.

A healthy dose of breakdowns, punishing drum beats and vocalist Chris 'CJ' McMahon's signature guttural roars of aggression that tail off each vocal are what makes this another death metal classic to erupt out of Sydney.

EMILY

## SIRENIA

### THE SEVENTH LIFE PATH

NAPALM RECORDS



Sirenia are well known for their orchestral arrangements and talented instrumental skills, so when the introduction to first track

'Seti' opened with a choir, I wasn't surprised in the slightest. The eeriness of 'Serpent' however, was surprising but not in a disconcerting way, it sat well within the already mixed up compilation that "The Seventh Life Path" had offered up so far and I was already craving more.

Variety has clearly been pushed to another level, with mixture of piano, intricate symphonies and an underlying guitar riff which continues throughout the record, adding the right amount of edginess to Ailys operatic vocals. The Longer than average but enjoyably catchy, 'Elixir' sat just under seven minutes long, and delivers intervals of horror like growling combined with clean male vocals, orchestral choir singing in parts and a guitar solo midway through all the dramatic instrumental moments, it really is an infectious assault to ears. It's fair to say the record gives off a mysterious persona and the track I found most intriguing was 'Earendel', pummelling drum beats and hard

rocking guitar riffs one minute and music that resembles that of a creepy carnival next, whether the intention or not, it works well with the haunting echoes of Ailys' angelic voice, which at times leave chills down your spine.

Though the record borders shy of death/extreme metal, it's clear it sits well within the gothic metal genre and takes the listener on a cinematic journey through this genre at its very best.

EMILY

## VINCE RIPPER AND THE RODENT SHOW

### 'IT'S FUN TO BE A MONSTER'

ECLECTIC



Pale-faced duo Vince Ripper and The Rodent come from excellent gothic rock stock. Vince is ex-Cramps front man Lux Interior and The Rodent is ex-Alien Sex Fiend Ratfink and their music is a tongue-in-cheek as their monikers. The pedigree of these two Brits has undoubtedly helped their live act, which usually involves cardboard 3-D glasses, Hammer horror style clips and a lot of smokey theatrics. This release is their first, as far as can be gleaned from the little information about it, but these guys are low-fi DIY outfit to say the least, preferring to play shows than get an entry on Wikipedia. The album 'It's Fun To Be A Monster' is not about making serious music. It's about making music that sounds fun to dance to, preferably in a graveyard or haunted castle crypt. Using film samples from B-movies, shock and roll chords and generic spooky lyrics this is thirteen (coincidence? Unlikely) tracks of punk surf boogie music (think the B52s at Halloween). With titles like 'Spider Baby', 'Zombie Dan'c' and 'I Was A Teenage Werewolf', Vince and his ratty friend are releasing a debut to enjoy playing to a live audience, one who is ready to bop until they drop while wearing red and green specs.

LENORE

## HATEFUL ABANDON

### 'LIARS-BASTARDS'

CANDLELIGHT RECORDS



Having formed over ten years ago UK band Hateful Abandon are (for want of a much, much better phrase) making a comeback. Their new release, optimistically titled 'Liars-Bastards', is an unapologetically desolate sounding kinda record, but by using a different style of sound and vocals on different tracks the album doesn't become just background misery. From industrial noises, metallic clangs and deep baselines to keyboards and ethnic chanting the boys from Bristol don't let the listener fade them out at any point. Even if the style of music

isn't to taste, there can be no doubt that each track is intelligently put together and intriguing in a way that can't be pigeonholed. Hateful Abandon manage to maintain the bleak and brutal atmosphere they desire without droning (or whingeing) and instead produce something interesting. Ok, 'Liars-Bastards' is not going to be interesting to everybody, but those who can appreciate something different done well will appreciate this and the kind of people that like this kind of thing, will really like this particular kind of thing.

LENORE

## MARSHEAUX

### 'INHALE'

UNDO RECORDS



Bands like Marsheaux are part of the surge of trendy cool-sounding electro that has become popular over the last few years. They are the kind of act that could just as easily be loved by goths as mainstream music fans (like IAMX or Monarchy). The female duo take influence from the likes of Erasure and Yazoo but keep the music on the good side of pop. The album is initially all floaty synths and harmonies, but 'Come On Now' introduces a harder beat and more danceable tracks. Following track 'Alone' gives a big nod to electro gods Depeche Mode and 'End Is A New Start' is uplifting 80s synth pop with a hint of VNV Nation. The album also features extended versions of tracks at the very end. 'Inhale' is not an explosive album by any stretch, but it is smile-inducing, accessible, sunny day electro.

LENORE

## SALEMS LOTT

### 'SALEMS LOTT'

RED MOON RECORDS



Don't be fooled by their appearance, these guys are no goth band (despite how hard the drummer tries). This Hollywood four-piece and their high-volume hair has more to do with Iron Maiden than Robert Smith. Salems Lott are a heavy metal band in the old school sense. Guitar solos, face-melting riffs, high-end vocals and a crazy stage show all included. The single 'No Choice To Love' is an epic metal opus, complete with sing-a-long chorus and thrashing drums. Even the mid-album instrumental 'Atlas' is riff heavy. 'Black Magic' has suitably cheesy lyrics (in a good way) and Monroe Blacks' vocals wail like a pro. 'Sonic Shock', as the title might suggest, turns up the heaviness, both vocally and through foundation-shattering drumming. Final track 'Twilight Traveller' completely changes tack (and pace) with a calming instrumental. These four clearly have talent, but I challenge anyone not to get distracted from the music by wondering how they get their hair to stay up.

LENORE

## SUICIDAL ROMANCE

### 'REVES & SOUVENIRS'

ALFA MATRIX



Suicidal Romance has been on hiatus for a few years with their last of their new material being released in 2012, and even then it was only an EP. The delay between releases undoubtedly has a lot to do with front man Dmitry Darling being busy releasing new stuff with his other band, electro-industrialists Freakangel. 'Revés & Souvenirs' is a collection of 'selected moments' according to Alfa Matrix, rather than a 'best of' but is designed to prepare the way for the new material Darling has been working on. Suicidal Romance has a decided Euro feel running through their work. Classic electro beats and club synths mix with Viktoria Selmar's floating vocals which switch between semi-operatic and popstrel. If it wasn't for Darling's ebm growl making an appearance below the main vocals, tracks like 'Lose Your Fears' could be played in Ibiza without an eyelid being batted. Each track on 'Revés...' has been remastered, and the album includes a sharp remix of 'Not Alone' by Blutengel and a welcome guest spot on vocals from Felix Marc on 'Ecstatic'.

LENORE

## DARKHAUS

### 'PROVIDENCE EP'

OBLIVION / SPV



Darkhaus are part of the new breed of genre-mashing groups. Much like their nationalities, their sound combines a lot of different musical breeds. Sticking with what made their debut popular back in 2013 – playing the styles they like and playing them well – this EP is a big, big tease. Although harder and rockier than 'My Only Shelter', 'Providence' is still perfectly restrained, composed and, well, excellent. From the get go the six-track offering sucker punches through the speakers. Metal guitar chugs are layered with gothic synths in a way that doesn't make you want to cringe like traditional gothic metal does. Hanlon's vocals are the perfect balance of rock and Euro-goth, the synths are used to punctuate the tracks rather than overpower and even the guitar solos are well placed instead of cheesy. Darkhaus have built on what they're good at and what their fans respond to, and made even more awesome synth-infused rock songs. If these guys aren't superstars in the next few years, I despair for the future of dark-genre music.

LENORE

## COAL CHAMBER

'RIVALS'  
NAPALM



Coal Chamber are back! What do you mean you don't know who Coal Chamber are? Oh that's right, they've been out of action for so long that some people will have never heard of them. How long you ask? Twelve. Years. While their contemporaries, like Korn, kept a hand in, releasing material every now and then, Nineties metallers Coal Chamber have been completely silent. After what the press release assures was a very public bust-up back in 2003, the guys and gals from LA have played together infrequently to say the least. Rivals is their 'comeback' album and it's a ball-puncher. The sound is very much of its time (as in the heyday of Nu-Metal and all that malarkey) but manages not to sound dated. The other thing about C.C. is the touch of darkness they incorporate, so it's not all baggy skate jeans and wallet chains, more fishnet tops and eyeliner. With really heavy guitars. The opening bass line of 'Light In The Shadows' screams Nineties, but the song built around it drags it firmly into the present. 'Another Nail In The Coffin' borrows from their most famous hit 'Loco' but only for a moment, utilising Fafara's creaky, slightly unhinged vocals and the classic Chamber funk-bass beat. Title track 'Rivals' is full of hate, the years of pent-up anger releasing themselves through the speakers. This is undoubtedly Coal Chamber, but without sounding like a rehash of old material, and definitely worth a listen. Perhaps a rest is as good as a change?

LENORE

## CYNICAL EXISTENCE

'WE ARE THE VIOLENCE'

ALFA MATRIX



Never one to hold back Cynical Existence kick off their third release with the title track, a high energy, visceral electronic dance track, where Fredrik Croona screams his vocals throughout. A good indication of things to come on an album designed to "wake you up from hell and trigger some self-torture and soul amputation!" This album is making some big promises then. Following track 'Wake Up Call' lessens the pace only slightly, but the vocals still grate like fine gravel. By track three, we are treated to some singing, albeit almost monotone. 'The Kill' is more melodic, but only relatively. Wojciech Krol provides some light relief as he guest vocals on 'Stains That Never Fade' but there is still no let up from the aural onslaught. We Are The Violence is fourteen tracks of hard dance and harsher vocals. Not wanting to

be outdone, the lyrics are fairly dark as well, with titles like 'Amputation of the Soul' and 'Affliction of Self-Torture' this is no picnic for the ears. Some may want to lie down in a dark room, while others will be donning their cyberlox and raving with glow sticks until 3am.

LENORE

## STAR INDUSTRY

'THE RENEGADE'  
ALFA MATRIX



Although the Belgian four piece have been together for almost twenty years, The Renegades is only their fifth album release. Star Industry seem to prefer playing live to recording but that hasn't prevented this latest album from positive reviews. These guys are old school – leather jackets, sunglasses, black boots – and so is their sound. The album's opener is classic gothic rock, down to the obligatory female-name title 'Elyne'. 'Driven' again evokes a decidedly Sisters sound, the backing choir, echoey drums and running beat, just less atmospheric, as does 'Selling Icons'. But just when they are in danger of becoming generic, 'Revelation' begins and offers an almost laid back bluesy track, more reminiscent of late-Depeche Mode, with some welcome synths. 'New Religion' gets a goth-stomp on and 'Reign On Fire' sounds like Sisters fronted by Chris Rea and is one of those tracks probably improved by being played live. If Star Industry were young whipper snappers producing this kind of material, they'd be accused of sounding derivative, but Star Industry have a pedigree which gives them license to produce classic gothic rock until they hang up their winkle pickers.

LENORE

## WUMPSCUT

'BLUT SPUKER TAVERN'  
METROPOLIS RECORDS



Can you believe that this is Wumpscut's 19th album? A constant presence in the background at any goth venue, Wumpscut feel like they've been around forever, but even so, 19 albums is an impressive number.

The brainchild of former DJ Rudy Ratzinger, who refuses to perform live because he considers it impossible to meet his own high standards, Wumpscut has grown increasingly eclectic over the years. Although technically "Blut Spuker Tavern" is dance music, more or less, it's less likely to actually be danced to than to be listened to through headphones in the dark. The whole album has an inward-looking feel to it, a sort of coldness that demands solo attention rather than enjoyment as part of a crowd. Tracks like "Gangraen" sparkle with sinister menace, and "Rattengift" feels eerie, unsettling, all the more effectively so because of how quiet it is. This is music where aggression lies just barely under

the relatively smooth surface, like a shark lurking in dark water. "Das Deutsche Schwer" sounds like the soundtrack to a stalking scene, a perfect illustration of how even the most upbeat songs on the album remain subtly menacing.

KIRSTY

## GANG OF FOUR

"WHAT HAPPENS NEXT"  
METROPOLIS RECORDS



Given the recent trend for legendary bands returning to the scene it shouldn't be a surprise that post-punk godfathers Gang of Four are back too, and yet somehow this particular return came as one of the biggest surprises of all, perhaps simply because one tends to assume that if something sounds too good to be true then it probably is.

Which is both true and not true, in this case. Guitarist Andy Gill is now the only remaining member of the original line-up, which is already disconcerting enough before you add in the rotating cast of guest vocalists. All of whom are excellent, which is where things get confusing. This doesn't sound like a Gang of Four album at all, though Gill certainly sounds like himself in places. How can it, without Jon King's voice and with not one but several people taking his place? At the same time, though, if one puts aside one's expectations as to what one expects to hear, is it a good album? It is, actually. How could it be otherwise, given the kind of talent that Andy Gill can summon with a snap of his fingers? It's just not a Gang of Four album, other than in name.

So, an album that sounds good and that people will enjoy listening to? Yes, probably, as long as they can put aside both expectations and the oddity of hearing Gill's guitar providing the backdrop to a complaint about the evils of Facebook. Now that's just wild.

KIRSTY

## ANTI-FLAG

"AMERICAN SPRING"  
SPINEFARM RECORDS



With the release of their first new album since 2012's "The General Strike", Anti-Flag are back, and they're angry. A huge presence during the Occupy movement, Anti-Flag were clearly caught up in the optimism of the time, and like many in that situation are now feeling the bitter disappointment of seeing hopes go for a better future go unfulfilled. Faced with a choice between apathy and anger, they've chosen the latter, more productive option, and it's written all over "American Spring".

Anti-Flag has always been a political band, unapologetic about their views and unafraid to express them, but the-

re's a distinct sense of it being more personal this time. During the time between "The General Strike" and "American Spring" bassist Chris lost his sister to murder and saw her killer walk free, an event which led him to connect with the events unfolding in Ferguson on a deeply personal level. That sense that the anger isn't abstract any more, it's up close and personal, permeates the whole album. And then there's the fear, too. "The Debate is Over" despairs over the fact that climate change isn't just coming, it's already here, and "Sky is Falling" rages over drone strikes.

Every so often there's an album that captures the feeling of a moment, a generation. "American Spring" might just turn out to be one of them.

KIRSTY

## FLASH BASTARD

"WILD"  
METROPOLIS RECORDS



Roaring out of the gate like a gloriously messy amalgamation of glitter rock, disco, and everything else that made the late seventies and early eighties so much fun, "Wild" certainly lives up to its name. As shallow as a paddling pool and proud of it, Flash Bastard is a band that doesn't care about political messages or else other than pure uninhibited hedonism. Imagine being the guy Ron Jeremy wanted to be, or at least getting drunk with him, and you're halfway there.

It's a very narrow cultural moment Flash Bastard is trying to capture, and it would be painfully easy for it all to slip into awkwardness, but then this was the fun part of the 80s, the time before the AIDS crisis hit and everything started to get serious fast. Think of it as Fast Times at Ridgemont High The Band, or Less Than Zero with the angst and ennui. It's nostalgia done in the best possible way, and if it doesn't put a smile on your face then it's hard to imagine what would. There are bands that want to make you think and bands that want to make you sad, but all Flash Bastard want to do is make you smile. Can't get simpler than that.

KIRSTY

## VAMPS

"BLOODSUCKERS"  
SPINEFARM RECORDS



Formed in 2008 by vocalist Hyde and guitarist Kaz, Japan's VAMPS make hard rock with a melodic edge. Kaz's former band Oblivion Dust was known for its solid rock sound, and Hyde has an insane 20 top 10 selling albums in Japan to his credit, with 8 of those hit-

ting the number 1 spot, and that's just with original band L'Arc-en-Ciel. The reason for those staggering numbers? It's all in the voice. Sexy, smoky, with a startling range and ability to project emotion across a huge range of genres, it's that voice that made him a star.

While some of L'Arc-en-Ciel's hits would have been a bit too saccharine for a Western audience, it was always obvious that there was a rocker in there waiting to get out, and with VAMPS Hyde finally has the opportunity to aim firmly in that direction. The catchy choruses and glorious soaring melodies are still there, but with more of an edge and less deference given to pop sensibilities. It's not metal, but it's nowhere close to Jpop either – think more mainstream radio-friendly hard rock done right. Kaz is a capable co-conspirator, providing the same solid musical backbone that made Oblivion Dust so beloved in its time.

"Bloodsuckers" is the band's 4th album, and their best so far. Polished, precise, and built on a foundation of genuine talent, VAMPS deserve the hype they're getting.

**KIRSTY**

## ANGELSPIT

### "THE PRODUCT"

BLACK PILL RED PILL



Darker and heavier than "Hello My Name Is", the newest release from Angel Spit features a host of musical guests including Miss Ballistic, George Bikos, Teknocracy, Helalyn Flowers, Adam Newman, and Noemi Aurora. Opening track "Hot Mess" sets the mood with jagged, aggressive guitar riffing and a catchy refrain. "Because God" continues the trend with some of the most pointed lyrics Angel Spit has produced in a while. "Ambassador" kicks off with an 80s-style intro and then morphs into aggression again, although the underlying dance beat remains. "Pretty Dead Boys" is a fairly typical Angel Spit track, and "Fight Dirty" is deliciously vicious. "Baal Arise" is another highlight, catchy and dirty and altogether delicious. "Velocity" slows down the pace and reminds listeners who might have forgotten that Zoog isn't a bad vocalist at all, with a range that goes beyond the growls that we most often hear from him. "Cut Sick" picks up the pace again and brings things firmly back on to the dancefloor. "Walking In The Woods" takes things into spooky, trippy territory with some assistance from Teknocracy, and "Train Wreck" picks up the pace a bit but keeps the slightly eerie feeling going. "Watch the Sunrise" is another showcase for Zoog's vocals, and "Weapon of Choice" wraps things up in suitably smoo-

th, subtly disturbing style.

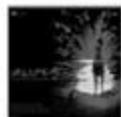
Overall "The Product" feels more complex and less accessible than other recent work from Angel Spit. The sound is massive and sophisticated, and the lyrics are as cutting and incisive as you'd expect from Angel Spit. This is the best thing they've done in a while, and well worth checking out.

**KIRSTY**

## jFLIST!

### "FUCK YOU I'M DEAD"

ART NOT LOVE



Brought to us by Montreal-based musician and visual artist Charlie Twitch, "Fuck You I'm Dead" is a delightful little ode to all things icky, oozy, and altogether spooky. Set for release on November 11th, the closeness to Halloween is clearly no coincidence. This is the debut album from jFLIST!, and it's a damn good start. With a sound that's part torch song, part carnival ditty, and part horror movie soundtrack, this project should appeal to fans of bands like Voltaire and Abney Park. Critics baffled by Twitch's style have coined terms like "foreboding art-pop", which isn't a bad description, but the jFLIST! Project has a much stronger carnival sideshow feel to it than that might suggest.

People who take themselves too seriously will hate it, but the rest of us may well end up won over by its quirky charm. Titles such as "Tuberculosis" give you a hint as to the kind of lyrical content to expect. Treading the same line between spooky and funny that The Addams Family did so well, if there's an justice then "Fuck You I'm Dead" will find exactly the audience it was meant for, and it will be the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

**KIRSTY**

## KMFDM

### "OUR TIME WILL COME"

DEAD CHERRY



A lesson in how to speak German for Americans, opener "Genau" will remind listeners why they either love or hate KMFDM. Who else would work lederhosen into an industrial song? Overall "Our Time Will Come" sounds a lot like the band's last album, "Kunst", following the same path that KMFDM has been treading for a while now.

There's a bit more variety than there was on "Kunst", though. "Genau", "Salvation, or "Respect" would have fit right in on any recent KMFDM album, but title track "Our Time Will Come" is something new, with a slow, almost trippy beat that's less classic

industrial and more Massive Attack and vocals that make better use of the smoother, more seductive end of Lucia's vocal range than we've heard in a long time.

The usual sharp lyrical focus on politics shows up on songs like "Blood vs Money" and "Playing God", the latter of which feels like a throwback to the alternative dancefloor anthems of the 90s.

"Get Your Tongue Wet" gives Lucia another opportunity to show off her full vocal range, and as a result ends up as the standout track on the album along with "Our Time Will Come".

Final track "Make Your Stand" has a positively 80s feel to it, complete with what sounds like a classic Casiotone layered over some parts of the track.

All in all "Our Time Will Come" has more variety to it than most recent KMFDM albums, which will no doubt delight some fans and annoy others.

**KIRSTY**

## WITHIN TEMPTATION

### "LET US BURN"

NUCLEAR BLAST



Containing live recordings of both the one-off symphonic "Elements" show from 2012 and this year's "Hydra" tour, "Let It Burn" is a massive 32-track album that gives listeners the opportunity to hear two entire concert's worth of music. 2012's "Elements" show, recorded at Antwerp's Sportpalais in front of 15,000 fans, was designed as a showcase to mark the band's 15th anniversary, and was widely regarded as a triumph. Running through tracks like "Iron", "Faster", "Fire and Ice", "In The Middle Of The Night", and "Ice Queen", the show captured the band on a high, full of energy and confidence in their own abilities. Fans of older Within Temptation material will be delighted with this part of the album, and for those who're newer to the band it should serve as a great illustration of how they got so big in the first place.

The "Hydra" recordings do a great job of showcasing the big hits from the album of the same name in a rawer form than the album itself, which many fans felt was a little overproduced. Live, songs like "Let Us Burn" come to life, with the obvious excitement of the crowd adding to the experience.

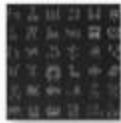
Having both recordings on one album is not only a bargain, but also gives an opportunity to compare the band at different stages in their development, and it's interesting to hear the differences in the way some of the same tracks sound with just a two year difference in when they were performed.

**KIRSTY**

## BRAINDANCE

### "MASTER OF DISGUISE"

PROGRESSIVE DARKWAVE RECORDINGS



This concept album by long-running project Braindance is a masterful, expansive production, a great delight of an album, with gorgeous packaging, and a mini-comic as well; Sebastian Elliott did the concept and the writing, the comic is illustrated and inked by Joe "Sweet-trot" Simko, and colored by Kieran Oats of Cadence Comics. Braindance's self-described progressive darkwave genre is an amalgamation of sonic influences including progressive metal, goth, darkwave, and industrial as well as a handful more genres. The result is one that comes together as a smooth, well-balanced and multilayered sound. Sebastian Elliott's vocals are consistently strong and passionately delivered, and the symphonic elements included in several of the tracks give this album a soundtrack-like quality. There are solid industrial elements too, and a good deal of sampling, some of the lyric content is made entirely of sampling, actually, and it's an interesting effect. This album also boasts some truly impressive guitar work. The album explores the universal themes of identity and purpose. Braindance is a group with a strong presence, a very good sense of who they are and what they want to send out into the world.

**GAIL**



# SEPTEMBER MOURNING

*By Kirsty Evans*

**W**ith a creative powerhouse in the form of vocalist Emily Lazar at the helm and band members who've played with Filter and Gemini Syndrome, September Mourning is a major multi-platform project years in the making. We caught up with Emily via Skype to dig a little deeper into the background and multiple interrelated arms of this very personal project.

**Hi, Emily! Can you give us some background on September Mourning and how the whole project came into being?**

It's been in the making for about four years now. The storyline started about five years ago and the music came together a little bit after that. With a project like this it's a process; there are so many different arms to it. You have the

comic book side, the storyline, we're developing a clothing part of it, and we're developing a gaming part of it, plus the musical side and the theatrical side. I think that's what makes art interesting is that it's always developing and taking on new forms and shapes.

**Given that the executive branch of the music industry often isn't full of the most imaginative people I'm wondering how you initially presented this idea to them. How did you frame it in a way that other people could understand?**

It all starts with the songwriting. I came in with a strong set of songs and a strong vision, and even though it had all these branches I had a game-plan. In music, because of the way the industry has taken shape, I think that a lot of people are more open to things being a bit

more cross-market, just because they're looking at money. They're looking at what can this band bring. If it's just a t-shirt and jeans band it's got to stay on the road 365 days a year or else nobody is going to get paid.

**The kind of thing you're trying to do is harder to establish, but if you can make it work there's a much bigger upside.**

Exactly, and that's basically been the selling point from the get-go. It's hard to put together a project like this, there have been a lot of pitfalls and a lot of days where I'm going "holy hell, what am I doing", you know? But then you find the people that get it, and they believe in you and they're like, OK, let's make this happen. And you know, it's like that in any business. I think if you're an artist who thinks like a business person you have a better >



> chance of having a successful career. Artists who're just pure artists and have no business heads and who're hoping that a label is going to come in and steer them the whole way through, unless you're fifteen years old, good luck. That doesn't happen anymore. There's just not enough money in the business for that to happen. You have to be really smart about your art, you have to be really smart about your projects, and just keep going and hope you find the people who help you push it along properly.

**Let's talk about conceptual side of the whole thing, the story. Where did that start?**

I developed it alongside Mark Silvestri of Top Cow Comics. I had this idea for this girl who was going to give people second chances at life. This reaper who instead of just taking life could have an internal sort of feeling like "This isn't right, I shouldn't take this life right now. This person has something else to do on this planet and I should give them the chance to do it". It basically came from my own loss in my life where I lost somebody who was very close to me who was my best friend of years and years, and when he was gone it was just like this big void and I just thought it was so unfair because he was so talented and had so much ahead of him. He was young and beautiful and just taken from this world way too early. It came from that, this whole project. I lost him in September and this project became an homage to that emptiness and how I felt about it. So she becomes this reaper/human hybrid who has the ability to actually put souls back into another person's body and let them live out their life and do what they needed to do that they couldn't do. She can't go totally against fate and keep them alive, but she can reincarnate them in a certain sense. It's a bit of a twisted fairy tale, and it's a little dark and morbid, but it has a very positive outcome.

**How are you planning to release the comic, on the web only or in print too?**

We want to do both. We want to start with six issues, which we already have the story art for, and get it out there and get readers engaged, get that whole culture engaged in the story and get them to love and understand the characters. I'm working with a wonderful writer and a lot of wonderful artists and with Mark Silvestri to conceptualize this book and put it together and I'm really excited.

**In terms of putting together live shows are you planning to incorporate elements from the story there too?**

As we develop more as a band there's going to be more and more storyline coming into the show. There's a little bit of storyline right now. The music is very emotional so I think that carries things, and we've made little interim pieces that tell about the story. Each character is represented on stage – September obviously, Riven, who's also a reaper, there's Wraith, there's Shadow, there's Stitch, there's another reaper called Rasper. Everybody in the band plays a character basically.

**Once you start doing more PR when you're on tour, and also audience interaction, are you planning to approach it almost as a sort of method acting where you stay in character all the time?**

It's basically that. I'm the character at that point. Obviously people know that we're not actually reapers who're out to steal their soul, but there's some fun in the fact that we can do something like this and play the parts. Not to the point where it's cheesy, but just to the point where you feel like you're entering a different world when you see us live. I've always loved going to shows that would take me out of my normal life and who I was, and I could go and transform into another place and another person. That's when I felt like, wow, this is a show.

**There actually aren't a lot of bands that offer that kind of experience any more.**

I think that's really sad. When I'm going to go see something live I want to see bands that put on a show. I want to be transported somewhere. Not just musically, I want a visionary in front of me, and I think we've lost that along the way, and it's sad. Pop has kind of gained that and rock has lost it. All the pop people now, they take you on a journey when you go see them live, and the rock people don't any more.

**It's a question of where is your David Bowie now.**

Yeah, where is your David Bowie, where's your Marilyn Manson, where's your Alice Cooper of today. Those bands are so old now and we just haven't had somebody do that again. It has a lot to do with the change in the music industry and the economy, but I think people would be receptive to it if it's done right.



By Kirby Evans

**There are definitely people who're looking for a more immersive experience.**

But it has to be done with a purpose. It can't be going on stage and doing stuff just for the hell of it.

**In terms of the costuming for this project, and your costumes in particular, how did those come about? In a way it almost reminds me of Japanese rope bondage, the way they have you wrapped with the straps. That's one of the first things that occurred to me when I saw the video, the fact that September almost looks like a Shinigami.**

That's exactly right. A lot of that has been my influence over the years. I'm obsessed with Japanese culture. I work with an incredible designer, and we've worked together and come so far with these outfits.

**I'm looking at it and thinking, it looks really cool but how do you design that so that you can actually move in it?**

And that was the thing! It went through all these different steps and it's just recently that we made it into something that was even better and a lot easier to move around in. It's so hard, especially if you want to do it right and you don't want it to look cheap. You want it to look like it's part of me, part of the character and the character isn't from Halloween Town, you know? We borrowed a lot from Japanese culture, and also a lot from ancient Roman warrior's breast-plating and things like that. Even the boots and the way they're put together is a little bit of that. Also it comes a lot from crustaceans (laughs). The way the boots and the joints bend and move, if you look at a lobster...

**That's funny; I was thinking that, it reminds me of the way a lobster shell fits together.**

That's literally where we took it from. Like, how can we make this move and still have the paneling and these rivets here? It took a long time to figure this out, and we're still figuring stuff out.

**So what's the plan from here in terms of starting to roll things out?**

We need to do another video, we need to put out some music, we need to go on tour and get everything out there. It's basically just the timeline of announcing dates and developing the storyline to the point where we can put it out this summer.

[septembermourning.com](http://septembermourning.com)



## Apocalypse Hardware



Goth

*By Lenore Gwynn*

The gothic subculture is almost unique in its characteristics. The style is instantly recognizable – usually black clad, heavy make-up, big hair – and this makes it easy for people to identify and label. It also has a set of core values and shared interests, demonstrated by studies of goths and the subculture over the years, that are deemed to be intrinsic to ‘being a goth’. An appreciation of literature and art as well as music is fairly standard, as is a love of the macabre and topics that others might deem morbid. Much like punks with their highly visual, identifiable style and strong values, goths take themselves more seriously than they realize. The problem with a strong appearance however, is that it can be easily replicated, and this is what causes arguments, goth-snobbery and accusations of being fake. But for a group that is at times so marginalized, why don’t we get along more with those that want to emulate us? And why, if our values are so important, do we openly mock them and even go as far as to deny our ‘gothicness’ altogether?

The answer to the first question is fairly straightforward in my mind. As is common among many burgeoning weirdos, we are often the subject of bullying. What feels natural to the soon-to-be goth is seen as freakish or awkward to others. As children turn into teens, trying to be adults, it is only natural that alliances form and exclusions are made. In order to be accepted (which is what everybody wants ultimately) some feel the need to reject others. In large communities there may be enough people for everyone to have a group in which they feel they belong, but in smaller ones goths can genuinely be ‘the only weirdo in the village’. Growing up and being made to feel as though who you are and what you like is wrong, is tough. If what you enjoy and believe in is part of who you are, there is little you can do about it, so when a group of like-minded people is finally found with whom you can feel accepted, it is not difficult to see why potential fakers would be met with rejection themselves. If becoming who you are has been a trial in itself,



# Lifestyle

**"I'm so Goth I eat darkness and shit bats"**

**For a subculture that on occasion seems happy to ridicule itself, it also takes itself very seriously**

anyone who comes along, trying to emulate it without having to go through the 'hazing', would be seen as disingenuous and undeserving of being part of the group.

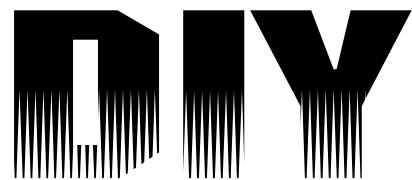
As for mocking our own culture, with all its intricacies and perceived 'rules', that is a slightly more complicated issue. In front of non-goths, especially those in the mainstream, it often feels important to be proud of who you are and make a point of where your cultural allegiance lies - as a friend of mine used to say 'to fly the flag'. This probably goes back to being bullied for being 'weird' and, having got through it, now being able to stand up and be proud of who you are (or in some cases even feeling superior to those who are not goth). Within a group of like-minded, black-clad, individuals however, it is funny to mock the things that set us apart from the 'normos'. This is ok, it is an 'in-joke', the mocking is on our own terms and as such reinforces our belonging. As in "I'm so goth, I can take the piss out of being a goth, because only I know what being a goth is and so do my friends". If this all feels a little analytical, it's because it is. I wrote my psychology dissertation on the gothic subculture. For this I was naturally awarded 100 'goth points'. 'Goth Points' is a prime example of gothic subcultural piss-taking and group reinforcement. For the uninitiated, Goth Points is a made up game where fictional points are awarded for goth-like behavior ('I adopted a bat and named him Vincent' for example) and deducted for non-goth behavior ('I went on holiday to Ibiza and got a suntan'). Occasionally actions are so ungoth, we have our 'goth membership' revoked. Something like buying the latest X Factor single might be such an example. One of the other classic in-jokes

is that some of the people considered most goth, deny being goth altogether. In their denial of being goth, they make themselves even more so. It's the kind of thinking that can cause black holes (the gothest kind). When it comes down to it, the only thing that can make you 'not goth', is not being one. Liking a mainstream band or hating the latest Tim Burton movie doesn't immediately make you a gothic failure, but if enough of your traits and tastes are gothic, you are a goth. If they are not, then you are not. Simple.

To outsiders, and those who think about it too much, it can often seem that goth has a schizophrenic nature. We are deemed to be worthy of the title if we have suffered because of our gothness, but we reject and look down on those who show an interest if they themselves haven't experienced the same thing. Once accepted as part of the group, we then make fun of the things that set us apart from those who made fun of us when we were younger. It doesn't seem to make sense, but this the nature of the beast and quintessential to gothdom.

For many people being a goth might be seen as a choice, but for myself it feels like something I was born with and finally found a name for. For a time it felt like I was the only goth in the village. Like some kind of corset-wearing, goth two-stepping disease, having a label for my general lifestyle helped find friends and also helped find acceptance and it is this that at once makes us take it so seriously and also allows us to enjoy who and what we are. It also means I am officially allowed to give and rescind goth points at will.

**FOR A  
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*By Melissa Lyttor*

**Nothing says gothic bedroom quite like a canopy does. It can add a level of drama and romance that basic bed dressing lacks. Canopy bed frames can also cost thousands of dollars. Fortunately, you can make your own canopy for around forty bucks in only a couple of hours.**

### **SUPPLIES**

- PEX TUBING AND CONNECTOR OR AN OLD HULA-HOOP
- TWO CURTAIN PANELS
- COLORED DUCT TAPE
- CEILING HOOKS AND HARDWARE
- CLEAR HANGING WIRE OR FISHING WIRE
- SCISSORS (OPTIONAL)



There are many different styles of canopy to choose from, but the easiest to replicate at home is the lit d'ange, which is French for "bed of an angel". It looks like a halo hanging over the head of your bed, hence the name. Choosing thin and airy curtains adds to the angelic vibe, and black sheer curtains are classic sexy goth. Heavier curtains can work as well; you just may have to reinforce your rigging to support them

Pex tubing is the basis of the rigging. It can be found at any hardware store, in a variety of sizes. The heavier the curtains you use, the thicker the tubing you should choose, to avoid the halo bending and sagging after construction. Just make sure that the tubing is still skinny enough to fit through the loops of the curtains. Pex

# CANOPY RIG

connectors come in different sizes too, so be sure to grab the proper fit for the tube size you choose. If you happen to have an old hula-hoop on hand, they work great as well, as long as they aren't the kind with lights inside them. Just snip an opening with some scissors, and continue as you would with pex tubing.

Colored duct tape is a simple way to give the rigging a face lift. You can either choose a color that matches the curtain, in order to blend the rigging into the background, or choose a contrasting color to make it pop. You can also coordinate the color with your bedding. Rip or cut small rectangles of duct

tains on, just like you would on a curtain rod. Make sure the curtain tags are facing the inside of the hoop. Then insert the pex connector into the tubing, and tape over it like you did with the rest of the tubing. The connector might stick out a little bit. If so, slide the curtains over so that any irregularities are hidden.

Next, cut a length of wire to use for hanging the rigging. The higher you want your canopy to hang, the shorter the wire should be. Just take the length of the halo diameter and add however far you want the canopy to be from the ceiling. Remember to leave a couple extra inches to account for the knots. Tie each end of the wire to opposite sides of the halo, where there are gaps between the curtains. The canopy and rigging is officially ready to go.

Before you install your ceiling hook, put some thought into where you want the canopy to be. The two traditional positions for a halo canopy are at the head

of the bed or the middle of the bed. At the head of the bed, the two curtains would flow off to either side. In the middle of the bed, the curtains would flow to the head and the foot of the bed. Follow the package directions to install the hook in the ceiling. Some hooks just twist in like a screw, but some of the heavier-duty ones come with reinforced support to install. If you used light curtains, the twist-in kind is fine, but heavy cloth curtains will likely need an elephant hook.

All that's left is to hang the rigging on the hook. Put a small twist in the middle of the wire, creating a small hoop to hang on the hook. This will help keep the wire from sliding to one side or the other. When the rigging is in place, arrange the curtains as you like. You can tie them back with decorative ribbons attached to your bedposts, or leave them hanging free. You can even attach a dream catcher to hang from the middle of the rigging. Get creative with your decorations, and you'll have a one-of-a-kind, elegant gothic bedroom in no time.



tape and carefully wrap them around your tubing, overlapping each slightly to eliminate any gaps. Don't try to wrap one long strip of duct tape around the tubing, or you'll end up with lots of bumps and creases. Leave a little un-taped tubing at each end until you're ready to close the halo. If you need to reinforce and stiffen the tubing for heavier curtains, just add additional layers of duct tape until you get the desired result.

Once the tubing is ready, slide your cur-



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# Elin Jonsson & Afterland

*By Gail Brasie*

**B**aroque, elegant, adorable and sinister—all are encompassed in the work of the Swedish artist Elin Jonsson. Having teamed up with Chris Powell, the two run the company Imaginary Games, and have spent the last three years working on an interactive mobile card game called Afterland.

Elin Jonsson has worked as an artist her whole adult life—while studying art education in university she had an opportunity to show her art in a local gallery, which led to her working for Peace & Love, at one time Sweden's largest music festival. She was able to switch out of education and pursue art full-time. Peace & Love was a massive undertaking, much more than a yearly festival, and Elin devoted untold hours to it for several years. It was during this time that she decided to become an entrepreneur.

While in school she met Chris Powell, the owner of the then-called Deadbug Games. Chris has a background in Landscape Architecture, and for him, the transition into owning a business and mobile gaming is about creating spaces for people to interact, very much like the goals of designing parks and public spaces that Landscape Architecture allowed him to do. He says “I believe that all of these fields share a common thread. If they are done well they all create an experience for a particular type of user.”

Elin joined Chris' company as co-founder in 2012, which they renamed Imaginary Games and relocated to Canada. There they began their work on Afterland, a free-to-play

digital collectible card game that allows players to play against friends and build social networks in-game as well.

The game takes place in the afterlife; players are on the quest for their souls, traveling with a dark carnival and performing magic, making friends, and discovering abilities along the way. Afterland offers a unique aesthetic and promotes social acceptance and growth. Characters team up and their abilities make the whole group stronger. Afterland also features a social-network of players and promotes online relationships.

Afterland seeks to avoid aesthetic and generic conformity. You won't see scantily-clad battle mistresses here. Instead, gorgeously rendered characters present themselves in an eerie and undeniably attractive way. Inspired by the Day of the Dead from the Mexican tradition, old-fashioned carnivals and folklore, the cards and characters of Afterland are in turns sinister and cute, enchanting and dangerous. Chris says that the game is meant to look like a dream, and the dream-like look and feel to the cards is a major draw for the games' audience.

Each card is hand painted by Elin Jonsson and then digitized. Elin spends hours painting every day, and says she needs to know and deeply understand each character she paints for them to be real to her. The team has recently added Sarita Kolhatkar, whom follows art-direction from Chris and Elin. Elin says of Sarita, “it has been a fun challenge to lead her into our well established dark and creepy art-style and to give her concepts to paint every week.”

The characters in the Afterland game are collaborations between Elin and Chris. Elin relates how the two of them have been working in that world and with these characters for three years, and have grown close to them, as well as their aesthetic style. The collaboration between them works synergistically, even though their style is different. Elin says that her characters tend towards the more romantic and feminine side, while Chris' are often less romantic and more sinister. She says that “we allow both sides to co-exist in Afterland and it creates a good mix of characters. We also help each other to not go to extreme in one direction. Afterland is the space between life and death and the world is full of wonderful misunderstood weird characters.”

On their work together, Chris says “my collaboration with Elin is the foundation of the company and what makes coming in to work everyday worthwhile. We have an excellent working chemistry and challenge each other to push our ideas further than we would be able to as individuals.” He goes on to mention that their interests are actually quite different, even their personal aesthetics are on the opposite end of the spectrum. It’s this contrast that creates such a strong working relationship, where their interests and desires are in balance, even if they aren’t identical.

There is a strong carnivalesque component to Afterland and the game’s aesthetic, which is both a classic and timeless source of inspiration, and one that’s having a bit of a moment just now. Elin says she’s always been drawn to the imaginative idea of a circus, a fantasy ➤



Antoinette by Elin Jonsson, inspired by Gothic Beauty Magazine

> carnival, one that doesn't necessarily exist in reality. She says that "there is something very romantic with the idea of a traveling circus that goes from town to town and performing." She also cites the Victorian period, Art Nouveau, and French architecture as among her influences as well. Additionally she admires the late Swedish illustrator John Bauer, who illustrated many Nordic folktales. On Bauer she says "his work is made with a sensitive hand and with a melancholic heart. The melancholic atmosphere is a common theme in the Nordic folk tale illustrations. Maybe it is the deep wide forests that create the melancholic atmosphere in Sweden, or the cold morning light that paints the meadows in purple and blue tones, or the fact that the sun barely reach over the tree tops in the winter time."

Elin often uses acrylic paint on wood, but more and more is moving into digital art. She has a very self-disciplined approach to creating digital art; there are things she will and will not allow herself to do, shortcuts she won't allow herself to take. She says "there is a warm and genuine feeling to the hand painted work though that is hard to mimic with digital painting. I'm trying my best to bring over my techniques from traditional art to the digital art."

Despite all their talent and efforts, there was a time when the team feared Afterland would never materialize. Elin says that "it was extremely hard to accept that everything we worked for might not work out. We have given all our time, all our money and all our emotions into this project. How can you accept that it might not work? It was impossible."



However, Imaginary Games received the Canada Media Fund, and also had a successful fundraising campaign through the website Kickstarter, both major coups for Elin and Chris. These successes will allow Afterland to become a reality at long-last. On receiving the Canada Media Fund, Elin says "it was one of my happiest moments in my life - that we got a second chance to bring Afterland to life. Afterland deserves that."

Chris and Elin's main focus right now is to bring Afterland to launch in the Summer of 2015, and to have cards to add to the game on a regular basis, so players have plenty of new experiences and opportunities. Afterland has taken up years of hard work, devotion, and love, and the payoff will be extraordinary. Elin says that after the game comes out, the team will still spend a good deal of time on it, but will also "start to explore new worlds."

Elin summarizes her last few years eloquently and poignantly when she says "the path for me has definitely not been easy but it has been worth it. It has been some very dark days but I have tried to channel

this energy into the art. Afterland has been a very challenging project but it has also helped me tremendously to become a better painter and entrepreneur. I have tried harder than I have ever done before in my life. I doubt my skills every day but somehow I just continue. I make a lot of mistakes, I try to learn from them and I move on." It looks like the work will pay off, and here's to hoping for the continual success and growth of Imaginary Games, and many bright things in Elin and Chris' future as artists and businesspeople.

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*Photo by Foto Door Photography*





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